LIVES

OF THE MOST EMPNENT

ENGLISH POETS;

WITH

CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS

ON THEIR

WORKS.

By SAMUEL JOHNSON.

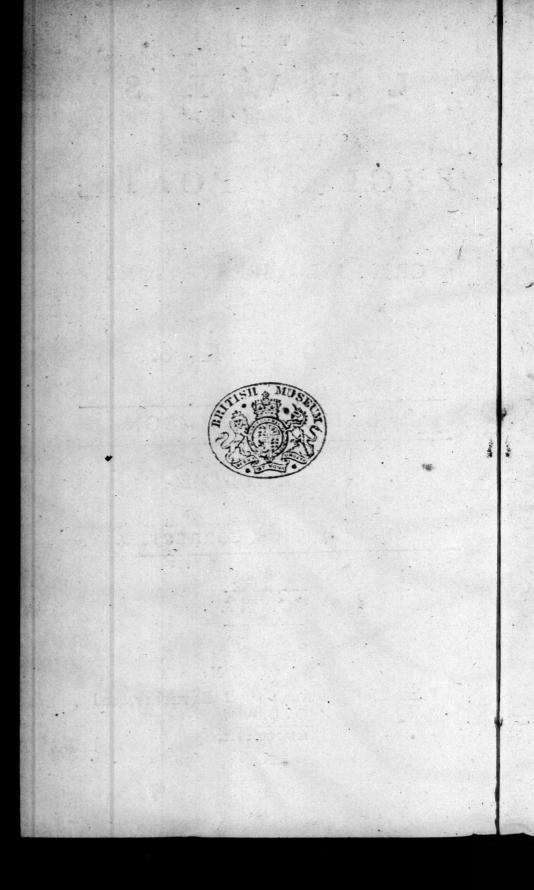
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POPE.

A LEXANDER POPE was born in London, May 22, 1688, of parents whose rank or station was never ascertained: we are informed that they were of gentle blood; that his father was of a family of which the Earl of Downe was the head, and that his mother was the daughter of William Turner, Esquire, of York, who had likewise three sons, one of whom had the honour of being killed, and the other of dying, in the service of Charles the First; the third was made a general officer in Spain, from whom the sister inherited what sequestrations and forfeitures had left in the family.

This, and this only, is told by Pope; who is more willing, as I have heard observed, to shew what his father was not, than what he was. It is allowed that he grew rich by trade; but whether in a shop or on the Exchange was never discovered, till Mr Tyers told, on the authority of Mrs Racket, that he was a linen-draper in the Strand. Both parents were

papists.

Pope was from his birth of a constitution tender and delicate; but is said to have shewn remarkable gentleness and sweetness of disposition. The weak-Vol. IV.

mess of his body continued through his life, but the mildness of his mind perhaps ended with his childhood. His voice, when he was young, was so pleafing, that he was called in fondness the little Night-

ingale.

Being not fent early to school, he was taught to read by an aunt; and when he was seven or eight years old, became a lover of books. He first learned to write by imitating printed books; a species of penmanship in which he retained great excellence through his whole life, though his ordinary hand was not ele-

gant.

When he was about eight, he was placed in Hamp-shire under Taverner, a Romish priest, who, by a method very rarely practised, taught him the Greek and Latin rudiments together. He was now first regularly initiated in poetry by the perusal of Ogylby's Homer, and Sandys's Ovid: Ogylby's affishance he never repaid with any praise; but of Sandys he declared, in his notes to the Iliad, that English poetry owed much of its present beauty to his translations. Sandys very rarely attempted original composition.

From the care of Taverner, under whom his proficiency was confiderable, he was removed to a school at Twyford near Winchester, and again to another school about Hydepark Corner; from which he used sometimes to stroll to the play house, and was so delighted with theatrical exhibitions, that he formed a kind of play from Ogylby's Iliad, with some verses of his own intermixed, which he persuaded his school-fellows to act, with the addition of his master's gardener, who personated Aiax.

er, who personated Ajax.

At the two last schools he used to represent him-

felf as having lost part of what Taverner had taught him, and on his master at Twyford he had already exercised his poetry in a lampoon. Yet under those masters he translated more than a fourth part of the Metamorphoses. If he kept the lame proportion in his

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other exercises, it cannot be thought that his loss

was great.

He tells of himself, in his poems, that he list in numbers; and used to say that he could not remember the time when he began to make verses. In the style of siction it might have been said of him as of Pinder, that when he lay in his cradle, the bees swarm-

ed about his mouth.

About the time of the Revolution his father, who was undoubtedly disappointed by the sudden blast of popish prosperity, quitted his trade, and retired to Binsield in Windsor Forest, with about twenty thousand pounds; for which, being conscientiously determined not to entrust it to the government, he found no better use than that of locking it up in a chest, and taking from it what his expences required; and his life was long enough to consume a great part of it, before his son came to the inheritance.

To Binfield Pope was called by his father when he was about twelve years old; and there he had for a few months the affiftance of one Deane, another priest, of whom he learned only to construe a little of Tully's Offices. How Mr Deane could spend, with a boy who had translated so much of Ovid, some months over a small part of Tully's Offices, it is now

vain to enquire.

Of a youth fo fuccessfully employed, and so conspicuously improved, a minute account must be naturally defired; but curiosity must be contented with confused, impersect, and sometimes improbable intelligence. Pope, finding little advantage from external help, resolved thenceforward to direct himself, and at twelve formed a plan of study which he completed with little other incitement than the desire of excellence.

His primary and principal purpose was to be a poet, with which his father accidentally concurred, by proposing subjects, and obliging him to correct his per-

formances by many revisals; after which the old gentleman, when he was fatisfied, would fay, thefe are good

shymes.

In his perusal of the English poets he soon distinguished the versification of Dryden, which he considered as the model to be studied, and was impressed with such veneration for his instructor, that he persuaded some friends to take him to the coffee-house which Dryden frequented, and pleased himself with having seen him.

Dryden died May 1, 1701, some days before Pope was twelve; so early must be therefore have felt the power of harmony, and the zeal of genius. Who does not wish that Dryden could have known the value of the homage that was paid him, and foreseen the great-

ness of his young admirer?

The earliest of Pope's productions is his Ode on Solitude, written before he was twelve, in which there is nothing more than other forward boys have attained, and which is not equal to Cowley's performances at

the fame age.

His time was now spent wholly in reading and writing. As he read the Classics, he amused himself with translating them; and at sourteen made a version of the first book of the Thebais, which, with some revision, he afterwards published. He must have been at this time, if he had no help, a considerable prosi-

cient in the Latin tongue.

By Dryden's Fables, which had then been not long published, and were much in the hands of poetical readers, he was tempted to try his own skill in giving Chaucer a more fashionable appearance, and put January and May, and the Prologue of the Wife of Bath, into Modern English. He translated likewise the Epistle of Sappho to Phaon from Ovid, to complete the version, which was before imperfect; and wrote some other small pieces, which he afterwards printed.

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He fometimes imitated the English poets, and professed to have written at fourteen his poem upon Silence, after Rochester's Nothing. He had now formed his versification, and in the smoothness of his numbers surpassed his original: but this is a small part of his praise; he discovers such acquaintance both with human life and public affairs, as is not easily conceived to have been attainable by a boy of sourteen in Windsor Forest.

Next year he was defirous of opening to himself new sources of knowledge, by making himself acquainted with modern languages; and removed for a time to London, that he might study French and Italian, which, as he defired nothing more than to read them, were by diligent application soon dispatched. Of Italian learning he does not appear to have ever

made much use in his subsequent studies.

He then returned to Binssield, and delighted himself with his own poetry. He tried all styles and many subjects. He wrote a comedy, a tragedy, an epic poem, with panegyrics on all the princes of Europe and, as he confesses, thought himself the greatest genius that ever was. Self-confidence is the first requisite to great undertakings; he, indeed, who forms his opinion of himself in solitude, without knowing the powers of other men, is very liable to error; but it was the felicity of Pope to rate himself at his real value.

Most of his puerile productions were, by his maturer judgment, afterwards destroyed; Alcander, the epic poem, was burnt by the persuasion of Atterbury. The tragedy was founded on the legend of S. Genevieus. Of the comedy there is no account.

Concerning his studies it is related, that he translated Tully on old Are; and that, besides his books of poetry and criticism, he read Temple's Essays and Locke on Human Understanding. His reading, though his favourite authors are not known, appears to have been

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fufficiently extensive and multifarious; for his early pieces shew, with sufficient evidence, his knowledge to books.

He that is pleased with himself, easily imagines that he shall please others. Sir William Trumbal, who had been ambassador at Constantinople, and secretary of state, when he retired from business, sixed his residence in the neighbourhood of Binssad. Pope, not yet sixteen, was introduced to the statesman of sixty, and so distinguished himself, that their interviews ended in friendship and correspondence. Pope was, through his whole life, ambitious of splendid acquaintance, and he seems to have wanted neither diligence nor success in attracting the notice of the great; for from his sirst entrance into the world, and his entrance was very early, he was admitted to familiarity with those whose rank or station made them most conspicuous.

From the age of fixteen the life of Pope, as an author, may be properly computed. He now wrote his pastorals, which were shewn to the Poets and Critics of that time; as they well deserved, they were read with admiration, and many praises were bestowed upon them and upon the Preface, which is both elegant and learned in a high degree: they were, however,

not published till five years afterwards.

Cowley, Milton, and Pope, are diffinguished among the English Poets by the early exertion of their powers; but the works of Cowley alone were published in his childhood, and therefore of him only can it be certain that his puerile performances received no improvement from his maturer studies.

At this time began his acquaintance with Wycherley, a man who feems to have had among his contemporaries his full share of reputation, to have been esteemed without virtue, and caressed without goodhumour. Pope was proud of his notice; Wycherley wrote verses in his praise, which he was charged by by Dennis with writing to himself, and they agreed for a while to flatter one another. It is pleasant to remark how soon Pope learned the cant of an author, and began to treat critics with contempt, though he

had yet fuffered nothing from them.

But the fondness of Wycherley was too violent to last. His esteem of Pope was such, that he submitted some poems to his revision; and when Pope, perhaps proud of such considence, was sufficiently bold in his criticisms, and liberal in his alterations, the old scribbler was angry to see his pages defaced, and felt more pain from the detection than content from the amendment of his faults. They parted; but Pope always considered him with kindness, and visited him a little time before he died.

Another of his early correspondents was Mr Cromwell, of whom I have learned nothing particular but that he used to ride a-hunting in a tye-wig. He was fond, and perhaps vair, of amusing himself with poetry and criticism; and sometimes sent his performances to Pope, who did not forbear such remarks as were now-and-then unwelcome. Pope, in his turn, put the juvenile version of Statius into his hands for

correction.

Their correspondence afforded the public its first knowledge of Pope's Epistolary Powers; for his Letters were given by Cromwell to one Mrs Thomas, and she many years afterwards fold them to Curll, who inserted them in a volume of his Miscellanies.

Walsh, a name yet preserved among the minor poets, was one of his first encouragers. His regard was gained by the Pastorals, and from him Pope received the council by which he seems to have regulated his studies. Walsh advised him to correctness, which, as he told him, the English poets had hitherto neglected, and which therefore was left to him as a basis of same; and, being delighted with rural poems, recommended to him to write a pastoral comedy,

medy, like those which are read so eagerly in Italy; a design which Pope probably did not approve, as he did not follow it.

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Pope had now declared himself a poet; and, thinking himself intitled to poetical conversation, began at seventeen to frequent Will's, a coffee-house on the north side of Russel-street in Covent-garden, where the wits of that time used to assemble, and where Dryden had, when he lived, been accustomed to presside.

During this period of his life he was indefatigably diligent, and infatiably curious; wanting health for violent, and money for expensive pleasures, and having certainly excited in himfelf very firong defires of intellectual eminence, he spent much of his time over his books; but he read only to flore his mind with facts and images, feizing all that his authors presented with undiffinguishing voracity, and with an appetite for knowledge too eager to be nice. In a mind like his, however, all the faculties were at once involuntarily improving. Judgment is forced upon us by experience. He that reads many books must compare one opinion or one ftyle with another; and when he compares, must necessarily distinguish, reject, and prefer. But the account given by himself of his studies was, that from fourteen to twenty he read only for amusement, from twenty to twenty-seven for improvement and instruction; that in the first part of this time he defired only to know, and in the fecond he endeavoured to judge:

The Pastorals, which had been for some time handed about among poets and critics, were at last printed (1709) in Tonson's Miscellany, in a volume which began with the Pastorals of Philips, and ended with

those of Pope.

The same year was written the Essay on Criticism; a work which displays such extent of comprehension, such nicety of distinction, such acquaintance with manking,

mankind, and fuch knowledge both of ancient and modern learning, as are not often attained by the maturest age and longest experience. It was published about two years afterwards, and being praifed by Addison in the Spectator with sufficient liberality, met with fo much favour as enraged Dennis, "who," he fays, "found himfelf attacked, without any manner of provocation on his fide, and attacked in his " person, instead of his writings, by one who was "wholly a stranger to him, at a time when all the " world knew he was perfecuted by fortune; and not "only faw that this was attempted in a clandestine " manner, with the utmost falsehood and calumny, " but found that all this was done by a little affected "hypocrite, who had nothing in his mouth at the " fame time but truth, candour, friendship, good-na-" ture, humanity, and magnanimity."

How the attack was clandestine is not easily perceived, nor how his person is depreciated; but he seems to have known something of Pope's character, in whom may be discovered an appetite to talk too

frequently of his own virtues.

The pamphlet is such as rage might be expected to dictate. He supposes himself to be asked two questions; whether the Essay will succeed, and who or what is the author.

Its fuccess he admits to be secured by the false opinions then prevalent; the author he concludes to be

young and raw.

"First, because he discovers a sufficiency beyond his little ability, and hath rashly undertaken a task infinitely above his force. Secondly, while this little author struts, and affects the dictatorian air, he plainly shews that at the same time he is under the rod; and while he pretends to give law to others, is a pedantic slave to authority and opinion. Thirdly, he hath, like school-boys, borrowed both from living and dead. Fourthly, he knows not his own mind.

mind, and frequently contradicts himself. Fifthly,

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"he is almost perpetually in the wrong."

All these positions he attempts to prove by quotations and remarks; but his desire to do mischief is greater than his power. He has, however, justly criticised some passages, in these lines.

There are whom heaven has blefs'd with store of wit,

Yet want as much again to manage it;
For wit and judgment ever are at strife——

It is apparent that wit has two meanings, and that what is wanted, though called wit, is truly judgment. So far Dennis is undoubtedly right; but, not content with argument, he will have a little mirth, and triumphs over the first couplet in terms too elegant to be forgotten. "By the way, what rare numbers are here! Would not one swear that this youngster had espoused some antiquated Muse, who had sued out a divorce on account of impotence from some sum perannuated sinner; and, having been p—xed by her formed spouse, has got the gout in her decrepit age, which makes her hobble so damnably." This was the man who would reform a nation sinking into barbarity.

In another place Pope himself allowed that Dennis had detected one of those blunders which are called

bulls. The first edition had this line !

What is this wit—
Where wanted, fcorn'd; and envied where acquir'd?

"How," fays the critic, "can wit be fcorn'd where it is not? Is not this a figure frequently employed in Hibernian land? The person that wants this wit may indeed be scorned, but the scorn shews the homour

" nour which the contemner has for wit." Of this remark Pope made the proper use, by correcting the

passage.

I have preferved, I think, all that is reasonable in Dennis's criticism; it remains that justice be done to his delicacy. "For his acquaintance (fays Dennis) " he names Mr Walsh, who had by no means the qua-" lification which this author reckons absolutely ne-" ceffary to a critic, it being very certain that he was, " like this Effayer, a very indifferent poet; he loved "to be well-dreffed; and I remember a little young er gentleman whom Mr Walsh used to take into his " company, as a double foil to his person and capacity.- Enquire between Sunninghill and Oakingham " for a young, thort, squab gentleman, the very bow " of the God of Love, and tell me whether he be a " proper author to make personal reflections?——He " may extol the ancients, but he has reason to thank " the gods that he was born a modern; for had he " been born of Grecian parents, and his father con-" fequently had by law had the absolute disposal of in him, his life had been no longer than that of one " of his poems, the life of half a day. - Let the perof fon of a gentleman of his parts be never fo con-" temptible, his inward man is ten times more ridi-" culous; it being impossible that his outward form, " though it be that of downright monkey, should dif-" fer so much from human shape, as his unthinking " immaterial part does from human understanding." Thus began the hostility between Pope and Dennis, which, though it was suspended for a short time, never was appealed. Pope feems, at first, to have attacked him wantonly; but though he always professed to despise him, he discovers, by mentioning him very often, that he felt his force or his venom.

Of this Essay Pope declared that he did not expect the sale to be quick, because not one gentleman in sixty, even of liberal education, could understand it. The gentlemen, and the education of that time, seem to have been of a lower character than they are of this. He mentioned a thousand copies as a numerous impression. *I

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Dennis was not his only censurer; the zealous papists thought the monks treated with too much contempt, and Erasmus too studiously praised; but to

thefe objections he had not much regard.

The Essay has been translated into French by Hamilton, author of the Comte de Grammont, whose version was never printed, by Robotham, secretary to the King for Hanover, and by Resnel; and commented by Dr Warburton, who has discovered in it such order and connection as was not perceived by Addison, nor,

as is faid, intended by the author.

Almost every poem, consisting of precepts, is so far arbitrary and immethodical, that many of the paragraphs may change places with no apparent inconvenience; for of two or more positions, depending upon fome remote and general principle, there is feldom any cogent reason why one should precede the other. But for the order in which they stand, whatever it be, a little ingenuity may eafily give a reason. It is possible, fays Hooker, that by long circumduction, from any one truth all truth may be inferred. Of all homogeneous truths at least, of all truths respecting the same general end, in whatever feries they may be produced, a concatenation by intermediate ideas may be formed. fuch as, when it is once shewn, shall appear natural: but if this order be reverfed, another mode of connection equally specious may be found or made. Aristotle is praised for naming Fortitude first of the cardinal virtues, as that without which no other virtue can steadily be practifed; but he might, with equal propriety, have placed Prudence and Justice before it, fince without Prudence Fortitude is mad; without Justice, it is mischievous.

As the end of method is perspicuity, that series is sufficiently regular that avoids obscurity; and where

there is no obscurity it will not be difficult to discover method.

In the Speciator was published the Meffiah, which he first submitted to the perusal of Steele, and cor-

rected in compliance with his criticisms.

It is reasonable to infer, from his Letters, that the verses on the Unfortunate Lady were written about the time when his Essay was published. The Lady's name and adventures I have sought with fruitless en-

quiry.

I can therefore tell no more than I have learned from Mr Ruffhead, who writes with the confidence of one who could trust his information. She was a woman of eminent rank and large fortune, the ward of an uncle, who, having given her a proper education, expected like other guardians that she should make at least an equal match; and such he proposed to her, but found it rejected in favour of a young gentleman of inferior condition.

Having discovered the correspondence between the two lovers, and finding the young lady determined to abide by her own choice, he supposed that separation might do what can rarely be done by arguments, and sent her into a foreign country, where she was obliged to converse only with those from whom her uncle had nothing to fear.

Her lover took care to repeat his vows; but his letters were intercepted and carried to her guardian, who directed her to be watched with still greater vigilance; till of this restraint she grew so impatient, that she bribed a woman-servant to procure her a

fword, which fhe directed to her heart.

From this account, given with evident intention to raise the Lady's character, it does not appear that the had any claim to praise, nor much to compassion. She seems to have been impatient, violent, and ungovernable. Her uncle's power could not have lasted long; the bour of liberty and choice would have come in Vol. IV.

time. But her defires were too hot for delay, and she

liked felf-murder better than fuspence.

Nor is it discovered that the uncle, whoever he was, is with much justice delivered to posterity as a false Guardian; he seems to have done only that for which a guardian is appointed; he endeavoured to direct his niece till she should be able to direct herself. Poetry has not often been worse employed than in

dignifying the amorous fury of a raving girl.

Not long after, he wrote the Rape of the Lock, the most airy, the most ingenious, and the most delightful of all his compositions, occasioned by a frolic of gallantry, rather too familiar, in which Lord Petre cut off a lock of Mrs Arabella Fermor's hair. This, whether stealth or violence, was so much resented, that the commerce of the two families, before very friendly, was interrupted. Mr Caryl, a gentleman who, being fecretary to King James's Queen, had followed his Mistress into France, and who being the author of Sir Solomon Single, a comedy, and some tranflations, was entitled to the notice of a Wit, folicited Pope to endeavour a reconciliation by a ludicrous poem, which might bring both the parties to a better temper. In compliance with Caryl's request, though his name was for a long time marked only by the first and last letter, C-l, a poem of two cantos was written (1711), as is faid, in a fortnight, and fent to the offended Lady, who liked it well enough to shew it; and, with the usual process of literary transactions, the author, dreading a furreptitious edition, was forced to publish it.

The event is said to have been such as was desired; the pacification and diversion of all to whom it related, except Sir George Brown, who complained with some bitterness that, in the character of Sir Plume, he was made to talk nonsense. Whether all this be true, I have some doubt; for at Paris, a few years ago, a niece of Mrs Fermor, who presided in an English Con-

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vent, mentioned Pope's work with very little gratitude, rather as an infult than an honour; and she may be supposed to have inherited the opinion of her family.

At its first appearance it was termed by Addison merum sal. Pope, however, saw that it was capable of improvement; and, having luckily contrived to borrow his machinery from the Roserucians, imparted the scheme with which his head was teeming to Addison, who told him that his work, as it stood, was a delicious little thing, and gave him no encouragement to retouch it.

This has been too hastily considered as an instance of Addison's jealousy; for as he could not guess the conduct of the new design, or the possibilities of pleasure comprised in a siction of which there had been no examples, he might very reasonably and kindly persuade the author to acquiesce in his own prosperity, and sorbear an attempt which he considered as an unnecessary hazard.

Addison's counsel was happily rejected. Pope forefaw the future efflorescence of imagery then budding in his mind, and resolved to spare no art, or industry of cultivation. The soft luxuriance of his fancy was already shooting, and all the gay varieties of diction were ready at his hand to colour and embellish it.

His attempt was justified by its success. The Rape of the Lock stands forward, in the classes of literature, as the most exquisite example of ludicrous poetry. Berkeley congratulated him upon the display of powers more truly poetical than he had shewn before; with elegance of description and justness of precepts, he had now exhibited boundless fertility of invention.

He always confidered the intermixture of the machinery with the action as his most successful exertion of poetical art. He indeed could never afterwards produce anything of such unexampled excellence. Those performances, which strike with wonder, are combi-

nations of skilful genius with happy cafuality; and it is not likely that any felicity, like the discovery of a new race of preternatural agents, should happen twice to the fame man.

Of this poem the author was, I think, allowed to enjoy the praise for a long time without diffurbance. Many years afterwards Dennis published some remarks upon it, with very little force, and with no effect; for the opinion of the public was already fettled, and it was no longer at the mercy of criticism.

About this time he published the Temple of Fame, which, as he tells Steele in their correspondence, he had written two years before; that is, when he was only twenty-two years old, an early time of life for fo much learning and fo much observation as that

work exhibits.

On this poem Dennis afterwards published some remarks, of which the most reasonable is, that some of the lines represent motion as exhibited by sculpture.

Of the Epistle from Eloila to Abelard, I do not know the date. His first inclination to attempt a composition of that tender kind arose, as Mr Savage told me, from his perusal of Prior's Nut-brown Maid. How much he has furpaffed Prior's work it is not neceffary to mention, when perhaps it may be faid with justice, that he has excelled every composition of the same kind. The mixture of religious hope and refignation gives an elevation and dignity to disappointed love, which images merely natural cannot befrow. The gloom of a convent strikes the imagination with far greater force than the folitude of a grove.

This piece was, however, not much his favourite: in his latter years, though I never heard upon what

principle he flighted it.

In the next year (1713) he published Windsor Forest; of which part was, as he relates, written at fixteen, about the same time as his Pastorals, and the latter part was added afterwards: where the addition

begins,

begins, we are not told. The lines relating to the Peace confess their own date. It is dedicated to Lord Lansdowne, who was then high in reputation and influence among the Tories; and it is faid, that the conclusion of the poem gave great pain to Addison, both as a poet and a politician. Reports like this are often spread with boldness very disproportionate to their evidence. Why should Addison receive any particular disturbance from the last lines of Windsor Forest: If contrariety of opinion could poison a politician, he would not live a day; and, as a poet, he must have felt Pope's force of genius much more from many other parts of his works.

The pain that Addison might feel it is not likely that he would confess; and it is certain that he so well suppressed his discontent, that Pope now thought himself his favourite; for having been consulted in the revisal of Cato, he introduced it by a Prologue; and, when Dennis published his Remarks, undertook not indeed to vindicate but to revenge his friend, by

a Narrative of the Frenzy of John Dennis.

There is reason to believe that Addison gave no encouragement to this disingenious hostility; for, says Pope, in a Letter to him, "indeed your opinion, that "its entirely to be neglected, would be my own in my own case; but I selt more warmth here than I did when I first saw his book against myself (though indeed in two minutes it made me heartily merry)." Addison was not a man on whom such cant of sensibility could make much impression. He left the pamphlet to itself, having disowned it to Dennis, and perhaps did not think Pope to have deserved much by his officiousness.

This year was printed in the Guardian the ironical comparison between the Pastorals of Philips and Pope; a composition of artifice, criticism, and literature, to which nothing equal will easily be found. The superiority of Pope is so ingeniously dissembled, and

the feeble lines of Philips fo skilfully preferred, that Steele, being deceived, was unwilling to print the paper lest Pope should be offended. Addison immediately saw the writer's design; and, as it seems, had malice enough to conceal his discovery, and to permit a publication which, by making his friend Philips ridiculous, made him for ever an enemy to Pope.

It appears that about this time Pope had a strong inclination to unite the art of Painting with that of Poetry, and put himself under the tuition of Jervas.

He was near-fighted, and therefore not formed by nature for a painter: he tried, however, how far he could advance, and fometimes perfuaded his friends to fit. A picture of Betterton, supposed to be drawn by him, was in the possession of Lord Mansfield: if this was taken from the life, he must have begun to paint earlier; for Betterton was now dead. Pope's ambition of this new art produced some encomiastic verses to Jervas, which certainly shew his power as a poet, but I have been told that they betray his ignorance of painting.

He appears to have regarded Betterton with kindness and esteem; and after his death published, under his name, a version into modern English of Chaucer's Prologues, and one of his Tales, which, as was related by Mr Harte, were believed to have been the performance of Pope himself by Fenton, who made him a gay offer of five pounds, if he would shew them in

the hand of Betterton.

The next year (1713) produced a bolder attempt, by which profit was fought as well as praife. The poems which he had hitherto written, however they might have diffused his name, had made very little addition to his fortune. The allowance which his father made him, though, proportioned to what he had, it might be liberal, could not be large; his religion hindered him from the occupation of any civil employment.

employment, and he complained that he wanted even money to buy books *.

He therefore refolved to try how far the favour of the public extended, by foliciting a subscription to a

version of the Iliad, with large notes.

To print by subscription was, for some time, a practice peculiar to the English. The first considerable work for which this expedient was employed is said to have been Dryden's Virgil; and it had been tried again with great success when the Tatlers were collected into volumes.

There was reason to believe that Pope's attempt would be successful. He was in the sull bloom of reputation, and was personally known to almost all whom dignity of employment or splendour of reputation had made eminent; he conversed indifferently with both parties, and never disturbed the public with his political opinions; and it might be naturally expected, as each faction then boasted its literary zeal, that the great men, who on other occasions practised all the violence of opposition, would emulate each other in their encouragement of a poet who had delighted all, and by whom none had been offended.

With those hopes, he offered an English Iliad to subscribers, in fix volumes in quarto, for fix guineas; a sum, according to the value of money at that time, by no means inconsiderable, and greater than I believe to have been ever asked before. His proposal, however, was very favourably received, and the patrons of literature were busy to recommend his undertaking, and promote his interest. Lord Oxford, indeed, lamented that such a genius should be wasted upon a work not original; but proposed no means by which he might live without it: Addison recommended coation and moderation, and advised him not to

be content with the praise of half the nation, where

he might be univerfally favoured.

The greatness of the design, the popularity of the author, and the attention of the literary world, naturally raised such expectations of the suture sale, that the booksellers made their offers with great eagerness; but the highest bidder was Bernard Lintot, who became proprietor on condition of supplying, at his own expence, all the copies which were to be delivered to subscribers, or presented to friends, and paying two hundred pounds for every volume.

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Of the Quartos it was, I believe, stipulated that none should be printed but for the author, that the subscription might not be depreciated; but Lintor impressed the same pages upon a small Folio, and paper perhaps a little thinner; and sold exactly at half the price, for half a guinea each volume, books so little inserior to the Quartos, that, by a fraud of trade, those Folios, being afterwards shortened by cutting away the top and bottom, were sold as copies printed.

for the fubscribers.

Lintot printed two hundred and fifty on royal paper in Folio for two guineas a volume; of the small Folio, having printed seventeen hundred and fifty copies of the first volume, he reduced the number in

the other volumes to a thousand.

It is unpleasant to relate that the bookseller, afterall his hopes and all his liberality, was, by a very unjust and illegal action, defrauded of his profit. An edition of the English Iliad was printed in Holland in Duodecimo, and imported clandestinely for the gratification of those who were impatient to read what they could not yet afford to buy. This fraud could only be counteracted by an edition equally cheap and more commodious; and Lintor was compelled to contract his Folio at once into a Duodecimo, and lose the advantage of an intermediate gradation. The notes, which in the Dutch copies were placed at the end of each

were now subjoined to the text in the same page; and are therefore more easily consulted. Of this edition two thousand five hundred were first printed, and five thousand a few weeks afterwards; but indeed great numbers were neeessary to produce considerable profit.

Pope, having now emitted his proposals, and engaged not only his own reputation, but in some degree that of his friends who patronised his subscription, began to be frighted at his own undertaking; and finding himself at first embarrassed with difficulties, which retarded and oppressed him, he was for a time timorous and uneasy; had his nights disturbed by dreams of long journeys through unknown ways, and wished, as he said, that somebody would hang him *.

This mifery, however, was not of long continuance; he grew by degrees more acquainted with Homer's images and expressions, and practice increased his facility of versification. In a short time he represents himself as dispatching regularly sifty verses a day, which would shew him by an easy computation the

termination of his labour.

His own diffidence was not his only vexation. He that asks a subscription soon finds that he has enemies. All who do not encourage him defame him. He that wants money will rather be thought angry than poor, and he that wishes to save his money conceals his avarice by his malice. Addison had hinted his suspicion that Pope was too much a Tory; and some of the Tories suspected his principles because he had contributed to the Guardian, which was carried on by Steele.

To those who censured his politics were added enemies yet more dangerous, who called in question his knowledge of Greek, and his qualifications for a

translator of Homer. To these he made no public opposition; but in one of his Letters escapes from them as well as he can. At an age like his, for he was not more than twenty-five, with an irregular education, and a course of life of which, much seems to have passed in conversation, it is not very likely that he overflowed with Greek. But when he felt himself deficient he sought affistance; and what manof learning would refuse to help him? Minute enquiries into the force of words are less necessary in translating Homer than other poets, because his positions are general, and his representations natural, with very little dependence on local or temporary customs, on those changeable scenes of artificial life, which, by mingling original with accidental notions, and crowding the mind with images which time effaces, produce ambiguity in diction, and obscurity in books. To this open display of unadulterated nature it must be a. fcribed, that Homer has fewer passages of doubtful meaning than any other poet either in the learned or in modern languages. I have read of a man, who being, by his ignorance of Greek, compelled to gratify his curiofity with the Latin printed on the oppofite page, declared that from the rude simplicity of the lines literally rendered, he formed nobler ideas of the Homeric majesty than from the laboured elegance of polished versions.

Those literal translations were always at hand, and from them he could easily obtain his author's sense with sufficient certainty; and among the readers of Homer the number is very small of those who find much in the Greek more than in the Latin, except

the music of the numbers.

If more help was wanting, he had the poetical translation of Eobanus Hessus, an unwearied writer of Latin verses; he had the French Homers of La Valterie and Dacier, and the English of Chapman, Hobbes, and Ogylby. With Chapman, whose work, though

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most totally neglected, seems to have been popular almost to the end of the last century, he had very frequent consultations, and perhaps never translated any passage till he had read his version, which indeed he has been sometimes suspected of using instead of the

original.

Notes were likewise to be provided; for the fix volumes would have been very little more than fix pamphlets without them. What the mere perusal of the text could fuggest, Pope wanted no affishance to collect or methodize; but more was necessary; many pages were to be filled, and learning must supply materials to wit and judgment. Something might be gathered from Dacier; but no man loves to be indebted to his contemporaries, and Dacier was accessible to common readers. Eustathius was therefore necessarily confulted. To read Eustathius, of whose work there was then no Latin version, I sufpect Pope, if he had been willing, not to have been able; some other was therefore to be found, who had leifure as well as abilities, and he was doubtlefs most readily employed who would do much work for little money.

The history of the notes has never been traced. Broome, in his preface to his poems, declares himself the commentator in part upon the Iliad; and it appears from Fenton's Letter, preserved in the Museum, that Broome was at first engaged in consulting Eustathius; but that after a time, whatever was the reason, he desisted: another man of Cambridge was then employed, who soon grew weary of the work; and a third, that was recommended by Thirlby, is now discovered to have been Jortin, a man since well known to the learned world, who complained that Pope, having accepted and approved his performance, never testified any curiosity to see him, and who professed to have forgotten the terms on which he worked. The terms which Fenton uses are very mercantile:

" I think

"I think at first sight that his performance is very commendable, and have sent word for him to finish the 17th book, and to send it with his demands for his trouble. I have here enclosed the specimen; if the rest come before the return, I will keep

" them till I receive your order."

Broome then offered his fervice a fecond time, which was probably accepted, as they had afterwards a closer correspondence. Parnell contributed the Life of Homer, which Pope found so harsh, that he took great pains in correcting it; and by his own diligence, with such help as kindness or money could procure him, in somewhat more than five years he completed his version of the Iliad, with the notes. He began it in 1712, his twenty-sifth year, and concluded it in

1718, his thirtieth year.

When we find him translating fifty lines a day, it is natural to suppose that he would have brought his work to a more speedy conclusion. The Iliad, containing lefs than fixteen thousand verses, might have been dispatched in less than three hundred and twenty days by fifty verses in a day. The notes, compiled with the affiftance of his mercenaries, could not be supposed to require more time than the text. According to this calculation, the progress of Pope may feem to have been flow; but the distance is commonly very great between actual performances and speculative possibility. It is natural to suppose, that as much as has been done to-day may be done to morrow; but on the morrow fome difficulty emerges. or some external impediment obstructs. Indolence, interruption, bufiness, and pleasure, all take their turns of retardation; and every long work is lengthened by a thousand causes that can, and ten thoufand that cannot, be recounted. Perhaps no extenfive and multifarious performance was ever effected within the term originally fixed in the undertaker's

mind. He that runs against Time, has an antagonist

not subject to cafualties.

The encouragement given to this translation, though report seems to have over-rated it, was such as the world has not often seen. The subscribers were sive hundred and seventy-sive. The copies for which subscriptions were given were six hundred and sifty-sour; and only six hundred and sixty were printed. For those copies Pope had nothing to pay; he therefore received, including the two hundred pounds a volume, sive thousand three hundred and twenty pounds four shillings, without deduction, as the books

were supplied by Lintot.

By the success of his subscription Pope was relieved from those pecuniary distresses with which, notwith-standing his popularity, he had hitherto struggled. Lord Oxford had often lamented his disqualification for public employment, but never proposed a pension. While the translation of Homer was in its progress, Mr Craggs, then secretary of state, offered to procure him a pension, which, at least during his ministry, might be enjoyed with secrecy. This was not accepted by Pope, who told him, however, that, if he should be pressed with want of money, he would send to him for occasional supplies. Craggs was not long in power, and was never solicited for money by Pope, who disdained to beg what he did not want.

With the product of this subscription, which he had too much discretion to squander, he secured his suture life from want, by considerable annuities. The estate of the Duke of Buckingham was sound to have been charged with five hundred pounds a year, payable to Pope, which doubtless his translation enabled

him to purchafe.

It cannot be unwelcome to literary curiofity, that I deduce thus minutely the history of the English Itind. It is certainly the noblest version of poetry which the world has ever feen; and its publication must there.

Vol. IV. C fore

fore be confidered as one of the great events in the

annals of Learning.

To those who have skill to estimate the excellence and difficulty of this great work, it must be very desirable to know how it was performed, and by what gradations it advanced to correctness. Of such an intellectual process the knowledge has very rarely been attainable; but happily there remains the original copy of the Iliad, which, being obtained by Bolingbroke as a curiosity, descended from him to Mallet, and is now by the solicitation of the late Dr Maty reposited in the Museum

Between this manuscript, which is written upon accidental fragments of paper, and the printed edition, there must have been an intermediate copy, that was perhaps destroyed as it returned from the

prefs.

From the first copy I have procured a few transcripts, and shall exhibit first the printed lines; then, in a smaller print, those of the manuscripts, with all their variations. Those words in the small print which are given in Italicks, are cancelled in the copy, and the words placed under them adopted in their stead.

The beginning of the first book stands thus:

The wrath of Peleus' fon, the direful spring Of all the Grecian woes, O Goddess, sing; That wrath which hurl'd to Pluto's gloomy reign The souls of mighty chiefs untimely slain.

The stern Pelides' rage, O Goddess, sing, wrath

Of all the woes of Greece the fatal spring, Grecian

That

That firew'd with warriors dead the Phrygian plain, heroes

And peopled the dark hell with heroes flain; fill'd the shady hell with chiefs untimely

Whose limbs, unburied on the naked shore,
Devouring dogs and hungry vultures tore,
Since great Achilles and Atrides strove;
Such was the sovereign doom, and such the will of
Jove.

Whose limbs, unburied on the hostile shore,
Devouring dogs and greedy vultures tore,
Since first Atrides and Achilles strove;
Such was the sovereign doom, and such the will of Jove.

Declare, O Muse, in what ill-fated hour Sprung the fierce strife, from what offended Power! Latona's son a dire contagion spread, And heap'd the camp with mountains of the dead; The King of Men his reverend priest defy'd, And for the King's offence the people dy'd.

Declare, O Goddess, what offended Power Enflam'd their rage, in that ill-omen'd hour; anger fatal, hapless Phæbus himself the dire debate procur'd,

T' avenge the wrongs his injur'd priest endur'd;
For this the God a dire infection spread,
And heap'd the camp with millions of the dead;
The King of Men the sacred Sire defy'd,
And for the King's offence the people dy'd.

For Chryses sought with costly gifts to gain His captive daughter from the Victor's chain; Suppliant the venerable Father stands, Apollo's awful ensigns grace his hands,

By

By these he begs, and, lowly bending down, Extends the sceptre and the laurel crown.

costly gifts to gain

His captive daughter from the Victor's chain;
Suppliant the venerable Father stands,
Apollo's awful ensigns grac'd his hands,
By these he begs, and lowly bending down
The golden sceptre and the laurel crown,
Presents the sceptre
For these as ensigns of his God he bare,
The God that sends his golden shafts afar;
The low on earth, the venerable man,
Suppliant before the brother kings began.

He fued to all, but chief implor'd for grace
The brother kings of Atreus' royal race;
Ye kings and warriors, may your vows be crown'd,
And Troy's proud walls lie level with the ground;
May Jove restore you, when your toils are o'er,
Safe to the pleasures of your native shore.

To all he sued, but chief implor'd for grace. The brother kings of Atreus' royal race. Ye fons of Atreus, may your vows be crown'd, Kings and warriors

Your labours, by the Gods be all your labours crown'd; So may the Gods your arms with conquest bless, And Troy's proud walls lie level with the ground; Till laid

And crown your labours with deferv'd fuccess; May Jove reflore you, when your toils are o'er, Safe to the pleasures of your native shore.

But, oh! relieve a wretched parent's pain, And give Chryseis to these arms again; If mercy fail, yet let my present move, And dread avenging Phæbus, son of Jove.

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But, oh! relieve a hapless parent's pain, And give my daughter to these arms again; Receive my gifts; if mercy fails, yet let my present move,. And fear the God that deals his darts around, avenging Phæbus, son of Jove.

The Greeks, in shouts, their joint assent declare. The priest to reverence, and release the fair. Not so Atrides; he, with kingly pride, Repuls'd the facred Sire, and thus reply'd.

He faid, the Greeks their joint affent declare; The father faid, the gen'rous Greeks relent, T' accept the ransom, and release the fair: Revere the priest, and speak their joint assent: Not so the tyrant, he, with kingly pride, Atrides;

Repuls'd the facred Sire, and thus reply'd.

[Not so the tyrant. DRYDEN.]

Of these lines, and of the whole first book, I am told that there was yet a former copy, more varied, and more deformed with interlineations.

The beginning of the fecond book varies very little from the printed page, and is therefore fet down without any parallel: the few flight differences do not require to be elaborately displayed.

Now pleasing sleep had seal'd each mortal eye;
Stretch'd in their tents the Grecian leaders lie;
Th' Immortals slumber'd on their thrones above,
All but the ever-watchful eye of Jove.
To honour Thetis' son he bends his care,
And plunge the Greeks in all the woes of war.
Then bids an empty phantom rise to sight,
And thus commands the vision of the night:

directs

Fly hence, delusive dream, and, light as air, To Agamemnon's royal tent repair;

Bid!

Bid him in arms draw forth th' embattled train, March all his legions to the dufty plain.

Now tell the King 'tis given him to destroy Declare ev'n now

The lofty walls of wide-extended Troy;
tow'rs

For now no more the Gods with Fate contend; At Juno's fuit the heavenly factions end.

Deftruction bovers o'er you devoted wall, hangs

And nodding Ilium waits th' impending fall.

Invocation to the Catalogue of Ships.

Say, Virgins, feated round the throne divine, All-knowing Goddesses! immortal Nine! Since earth's wide regions, heaven's unmeasur'd height,

And hell's abyss, hide nothing from your fight, (We, wretched mortals! lost in doubts below, But guess by rumour, and but boast we know) Oh say what heroes, fir'd by thirst of same, Or urg'd by wrongs, to Troy's destruction came! To count them all, demands a thousand tongues, A throat of brass and adamantine lungs.

Now, Virgin Goddesses, immortal Nine!
That round Olympus' heavenly summit shine,
Who see through heaven and earth, and hell prosound,
And all things know, and all things can resound;
Relate what armies sought the Trojan land,
What nations follow'd, and what chiefs command;
(For doubtful Fame distracts mankind below,
And nothing can we tell, and nothing know)
Without your aid, to count th' unnumber'd train,
A thousand mouths, a thousand tongues were vain.

Book V. v. 1.

But Pallas now Tydides' foul inspires,
Fills with her force, and warms with all her fires;
Above the Greeks his deathless fame to raise,
And crown her hero with distinguish'd praise,
High on his helm celestial lightnings play,
His beamy shield emits a living ray;
Th' unwearied blaze incessant streams supplies,
Like the red star that fires th' autumnal skies.

But Pallas now Tydides' foul inspires,
Fills with her rage, and warms with all her fires;
force,

O'er all the Greeks decrees his fame to raife, Above the Greeks her warrior's fame to raife, his deathless

Andcrown her hero with immorial praise: distinguish'd

Bright from his beamy creft the lightnings play,
High on helm
From his broad buckler flash'd the living ray,
High on his helm celestial lightnings play,
His beamy shield emits a living ray.
The Goddess with her breath the slame supplies,
Bright as the star whose fires in Autumn rise:
Her breath divine thick streaming slames supplies,
Bright as the star that fires the autumnal skies:
Th' unwearied blaze incessant streams supplies,
Like the red star that fires th' autumnal skies.

When first he rears his radiant orb to fight, And bath'd in ocean shoots a keener light. Such glories Pallas on the chief bestow'd, Such from his arms the fierce essugence flow'd; Onward she drives him furious to engage, Where the fight burns, and where the thickest rage.

When

When fresh he rears his radiant orb to sight,
And gilds old Ocean with a blaze of light,
Bright as the star that fires th' autumnal skies,
Fresh from the deep, and gilds the seas and skies.
Such glories Pallas on her chief bestow'd,
Such sparkling rays from his bright armour flow'd,
Such from his arms the sierce esfulgence flow'd.
Onward she drives him headlong to engage,
furious

Where the war bleeds, and where the fiercest rage. fight burns, thickest

The fons of Dares first the combat sought, A wealthy priest, but rich without a fault; In Vulcan's fane the father's days were led, The sons to toils of glorious battle bred;

There lived a Trojan—Dares was his name, The priest of Vulcan, rich, yet void of blame; The sons of Dares first the combat sought, A wealthy priest, but rich without a fault.

Conclusion of Book VIII. v. 687.

As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night;
O'er heaven's clear azure spreads her facred light;
When not a breath disturbs the deep serene,
And not a cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene;
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole:
O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure shed,
And tip with silver every mountain's head;
Then shine the vales—the rocks in prospect rise,
A flood of glory bursts from all the skies;
The conscious swains, rejoicing in the sight,
Eye the blue vault, and bless the useful light.
So many slames before proud llion blaze,
And lighten glimmering Xanthus with their rays;
The

The long reflection of the distant fires
Gleam on the walls, and tremble on the spires:
A thousand piles the dusky horrors gild,
And shoot a shady lustre o'er the field;
Full fifty guards each flaming pile attend,
Whose umber'd arms by fits thick flashes send;
Loud neigh the coursers o'er their heaps of corp,
And ardent warriors wait the rising morn.

As when in stillness of the filent night,
As when the moon in all her lustre bright,
As when the moon refulgent lamp of night,
O'er heaven's clear azure sheds her silver light;
pure spreads facred

As still in air the trembling lustre stood, And o'er its golden border shoots a flood; When no loose gale disturbs the deep serene, not a breath

And no dim cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene; not a

Around her filver throne the planets glow,
And stars unnumber'd trembling beams bestow;
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole:
Clear gleams of light o'er the dark trees are seen,
o'er the dark trees a yellow sheds,
O'er the dark trees a yellower green they shed,

gleam verdure

And tip with filver all the mountain heads: forest

And tip with filver every mountain's head. The vallies open, and the forests rise, The vales appear, the rocks in prospect rise, Then skine the vales, the rocks in prospect rise, All Nature stands reveal'd before our eyes; A slood of glory bursts from all the skies. The conscious shepherd, joyful at the fight, Eyes the blue vault, and numbers every light.

The

The confcious fivains rejoicing at the fight
five five five fight grains with delight
Eye the blue vault, and bless the vivid light,
glorious
useful

So many flames before the navy blaze, proud llion

And lighten glimmering Xanthus with their rays, Wide o'er the fields to Troy extend the gleams, And tip the distant spires with fainter beams; The long reslexions of the distant fires Gild the high walls, and tremble on the spires, Gleam on the walls, and tremble on the spires; A thousand fires at distant stations bright, Gild the dark prospect, and dispel the night.

Of these specimens every man who has cultivated poetry, or who delights to trace the mind from the rudeness of its first conceptions to the elegance of its last, will naturally desire a greater number; but most other readers are already tired, and I am not writing

only to poets and philosophers.

The Iliad was published volume by volume, as the translation proceeded; the four first books appeared in 1715. The expectation of this work was undoubtedly high, and every man who had connected his name with criticism, or poetry, was desirous of such intelligence as might enable him to talk upon the popular topic. Halifax, who, by having been first a poet, and then a patron of poetry, had acquired the right of being a judge, was willing to hear some books while they were yet unpublished. Of this rehearfal Pope afterwards gave the following account *.

"The famous Lord Halifax was rather a pretender to taste than really possessed of it.—When I had finished the two or three first books of my translation of the Italy

et tion of the Iliad, that Lord defired to have the plea-

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" fure of hearing them read at his house .- Addison. " Congreve, and Garth, were there at the reading. In so four or five places, Lord Halifax stopt me very civil. " ly, and with a fpeech each time, much of the fame "kind, 'I beg your pardon, Mr Pope; but there is " fomething in that passage; that does not quite please "me.—Be fo good as to mark the place, and confider "it a little at your leifure. I'm fure you can give it " a little turn.' I returned from Lord Halifax's with "Dr Garth, in his chariot; and, as we were going " along, was faying to the Doctor, that my Lord had " laid me under a good deal of difficulty by fuch loofe and general observations; that I had been thinking " over the passages almost ever fince, and could not " guess at what it was that offended his Lordship in Garth laughed heartily at my emeither of them. " barraffment; faid, I had not been long enough acquainted with Lord Halifax to know his way yet: " that I need not puzzle myfelf about looking those places over and over, when I got home. All you " need do (fays he) is to leave them just as they are " call on Lord Halifax two or three months hence. " thank him for his kind observations on those pas-" fages, and then read them to him as altered. I have "known him much longer than you have, and will " be answerable for the event.' I followed his advice: "waited on Lord Halifax fome time after; faid, I " hoped he would find his objections to those passages " removed; read them to him exactly as they were "at first: and his Lordship was extremely pleased " with them, and cried out, Ay, now they are perfectly " right : nothing can be better."

It is feldom that the great or the wife suspect that they are despised or cheated. Halifax, thinking this a lucky opportunity of securing immortality, made some advances of savour and some overtures of advantage to Pope, which he seems to have received with sullen coldness. All our knowledge of this transaction

transaction is derived from a fingle Letter (Dec. 1; 1714), in which Pope fays, "I am obliged to you, " both for the favours you have done me, and those " you intend me. I diftrust neither your will nor "your memory, when it is to do good; and if I ever " become troublesome or folicitous, it must not be out " of expectation, but out of gratitude. Your Lord-" ship may cause me to live agreeably in the town, or " contentedly in the country, which is really all the "difference I fet between an easy fortune and a small " one. It is indeed a high strain of generosity in you to think of making me eafy all my life, only be-" cause I have been so happy as to divert you some " few hours; but, if I may have leave to add, it is be-" cause you think me no enemy to my native country, "there will appear a better reason; for I must of confequence be very much (as I fincerely am) yours es &cc."

These voluntary offers, and this faint acceptance, ended without effect. The patron was not accustomed to such frigid gratitude, and the poet sed his own pride with the dignity of independence. They probably were suspicious of each other. Pope would not dedicate till he saw at what rate his praise was valued; he would be troublesome out of gratitude, not excellation. Halifax thought himself entitled to considence; and would give nothing, unless he knew what he should receive. Their commerce had its beginning in hope of praise on one side, and of money on the other, and ended because Pope was less eager of money than Halifax of praise. It is not likely that Halifax had any personal benevolence to Pope; it is evident that Pope looked on Halifax with scorn and hatred.

The reputation of this great work failed of gaining him a patron; but it deprived him of a friend. Addison and he were now at the head of poetry and criticism; and both in such a state of elevation, that, like the two rivals in the Roman state, one could no lon-

ger bear an equal, nor the other a superior. Of the gradual abatement of kindness between friends, the beginning is often scarcely discernible by themselves, and the process is continued by petty provocations, and incivilities sometimes peevishly returned, and sometimes contemptuously neglected, which would escape all attention but that of pride, and drop from any memory but that of resentment. That the quarrel of those two wits should be minutely deduced, is not to be expected from a writer to whom, as Homer says, nothing but rumour has reached, and who has no personal knowledge.

Pope doubtless approached Addison, when the reputation of their wit first brought them together, with the respect due to a man whose abilities were acknowledged, and who, having attained that eminence to which he was himself aspiring, had in his hands the distribution of literary same. He paid court with sufficient diligence by his Prologue to Gato, by his abuse of Dennis, and, with praise yet more direct, by his poem on the Dialogues on Medals, of which the immediate publication was then intended. In all this there was no hypocrify; for he confessed that he found in Addison something more pleasing than in any other

man.

It may be supposed, that as Pope saw himself favoured by the world, and more frequently compared his own powers with those of others, his considence increased, and his submission lessened; and that Addison felt no delight from the advances of a young wit, who might soon contend with him for the highest place. Every great man, of whatever kind be his greatness, has among his friends those who officiously, or insidiously, quicken his attention to offences, heighten his disgust, and stimulate his resentment. Of such adherents Addison doubtless had many, and Pope was now too high to be without them.

From the emission and reception of the Proposals Vol. IV.

for the Iliad, the kindness of Addison seems to have abated. Jervas the painter once pleafed himfelf (Aug. 20, 1714) with imagining that he had re-established their friendship; and wrote to Pope that Addison once suspected him of too close a confederacy with Swift, but was now fatisfied with his conduct. To this Pope answered, a week after, that his engagements to Swift were fuch as his fervices in regard to the subscription demanded, and that the Tories never put him under the necessity of asking leave to be grateful. "But," fays he, "as Mr Addison must be " the judge in what regards himself, and seems to have " no very just one in regard to me, so I must own to " you I expect nothing but civility from him." In the fame Letter he mentions Philips, as having been bufy to kindle animofity between them; but, in a Letter to Addison; he expresses some consciousness of behaviour, inattentively deficient in respect.

Of Swift's industry in promoting the subscription there remains the testimony of Kennet, no friend to

either him or Pope.

"Nov. 2, 1713. Dr Swift came into the coffeehouse, and had a bow from every body but me, who,
I confess, could not but despise him. When I came
to the antichamber to wait, before prayers, Dr Swift
was the principal man of talk and business, and acted as master, of requests.—Then he instructed a
young nobleman that the best Poet in England was
Mr Pope (a papist), who had begun a translation of
Homer into English verse, for which he must have
them all substribe; for, says he, the author shall not
begin to print till I have a thousand guineas for
him."

About this time it is likely that Steele, who was, with all his political fury, good-natured and officious, procured an interview between these angry rivals, which ended in aggravated malevolence. On this occasion, if the reports be true, Pope made his complaint

plaint with frankness and spirit, as a man undeservedly neglected or opposed; and Addison affected a contemptuous unconcern, and, in a calm even voice, reproached Pope with his vanity, and, telling him of the improvements which his early works had received from his own remarks and those of Steele, said, that he, being now engaged in public business, had no longer any care for his poetical reputation; nor had any other desire, with regard to Pope, than that his should not, by too much arrogance, alienate the public.

To this Pope is faid to have replied with great keenness and severity, upbraiding Addison with perpetual dependance, and with the abuse of those qualifications which he had obtained at the public cost, and charging him with mean endeavours to obstruct the progress of rising merit. The contest rose so high, that they parted at last without any interchange of civility.

The first volume of Homer was (1715) in time published; and a rival version of the first Iliad, for rivals the time of their appearance inevitably made them, was immediately printed, with the name of Tickell. It was foon perceived that, among the followers of Addison, Tickell had the preference, and the critics and poets divided into factions. "I," fays Pope, " have the town, that is, the mob, on my fide; " but it is not uncommon for the smaller party to sup-" ply by industry what it wants in numbers. — I ap-" peal to the people as my rightful judges, and while " they are not inclined to condemn me, shall not fear " the high-flyers at Button's." This opposition he immediately imputed to Addison, and complained of it in terms fufficiently refentful to Craggs, their common friend.

When Addison's opinion was asked, he declared the versions to be both good, but Tickell's the best that had ever been written; and sometimes said that they were both good, but that Tickell had more of Homer.

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Pope was now fufficiently irritated; his reputation and his interest were at hazard. He once intended to print together the sour versions of Dryden, Maynwaring, Pope, and Tickell, that they might be readily compared and fairly estimated. This design seems to have been deseated by the resultal of Tonson, who was

the proprietor of the other three versions.

Pope intended at another time a rigorous criticism of Tickell's translation, and had marked a copy, which I have seen, in all places that appeared desective. But while he was thus meditating desence or revenge, his adversary sunk before him without a blow; the voice of the public were not long divided, and the presence was universally given to Pope's performance.

He was convinced, by adding one circumstance to another, that the other translation was the work of Addison himself; but if he knew it in Addison's lifetime, it does not appear that he told it. He left his illustrious antagonist to be punished by what has been considered as the most painful of all reslections, the

remembrance of a crime perpetrated in vain.

The other circumstances of their quarrel were thus

related by Pope *.

"Philips feemed to have been encouraged to abuse me in coffee-houses, and conversations: and Gildon wrote a thing about Wycherley, in which he had abused both me and my relations very grossy.

Lord Warwick himself told me one day, that it was in vain for me to endeavour to be well with Mr.
Addison; that his jealous temper would never admit of a settled friendship between us: and, to convince me of what he had said, assured me, that Addison had encouraged Gildon to publish those scandidals, and had given him ten guineas after they were published. The next day, while I was heated with

"what I had heard, I wrote a letter to Mr Addison, to let him know that I was not unacquainted with this behaviour of his; that if I was to speak severely of him, in return for it, it should be in such a dirty way, that I should rather tell him, himself, fairly of his faults, and allow his good qualities; and that it should be something in the following manner: I then adjoined the first sketch of what has since been called my satire on Addison. Mr Addison used me very civilly ever after."

The verses on Addison, when they were sent to Atterbury, were considered by him as the most excellent of Pope's performances; and the writer was advised, since he knew where his strength lay, not to

fuffer it to remain unemployed.

This year (1715) being, by the subscription, enabled to live more by choice, having persuaded his father to sell their estate at Binfield, he purchased, I think only for his life, that house at Twickenham to which his residence afterwards procured so much celebration, and removed thither with his father and mother.

Here he planted the vines and the quincunx which his veries mention; and being under the necessity of making a subterraneous passage to a garden on the other side of the road, he adorned it with fossile bodies, and disnisted it with the title of a grotto; a place of silence and retreat, from which he endeavoured to persuade his friends and himself that cares

and paffions could be excluded.

A grotto is not often the wish or pleasure of an Englishman, who has more frequent need to solicit than exclude the sun; but Pope's excavation was requisite as an entrance to his garden, and, as some men try to be proud of their defects, he extracted an ornament from an inconvenience, and vanity produced a grotto where necessity enforced a passage. It may be frequently remarked of the studious and speculative, that they are proud of trisles, and that their a-

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musements.

musements seem frivolous and childish; whether it be that men conscious of great reputation think themselves above the reach of censure, and safe in the admission of negligent indulgences, or that mankind expect from elevated genius an uniformity of greatness, and watch its degradation with malicious wonder; like him who having followed with his eye an eagle into the clouds, should lament that she ever descended

to a perch.

While the volumes of his Homer were annually published, he collected his former works (1717) into one quarto volume, to which he prefixed a Preface, written with great spriteliness and elegance, which was afterwards reprinted, with some passages subjoined that he at first omitted; other marginal additions of the same kind he made in the later editions of his poems. Waller remarks, that poets lose half their praise, because the reader knows not what they have blotted. Pope's voracity of same taught him the art of obtaining the accumulated honour both of what he had published, and of what he had suppressed.

In this year his father died suddenly, in his seventyfifth year, having passed twenty-nine years in privacy. He is not known but by the character which his son has given him. If the money with which he retired was all gotten by himself, he had traded very successfully in times when sudden riches were rarely attain-

able.

The publication of the Iliad was at last completed in 1720. The splendour and success of this work raised Pope many enemies, that endeavoured to depreciate his abilities; Burnet, who was afterwards a Judge of no mean reputation, censured him in a piece called Homerides before it was published; Ducket likewise endeavoured to make him ridiculous. Dennis was the perpetual persecutor of all his studies. But, whoever his critics were, their writings are lost, and

the names which are preserved, are preserved in the Dunciad.

In this disastrous year (1720) of national infatuation, when more riches than Peru can boast were expected from the South Sea, when the contagion of avarice tainted every mind, and even poets panted after wealth, Pope was seized with the universal passion, and ventured some of his money. The stock rose in its price; and he for a while thought himself the Lord of thousands. But this dream of happiness did not last long, and he seems to have waked soon enough to get clear with the loss only of what he once thought himself to have won, and perhaps not wholly of that.

Next year he published some select poems of his friend Dr Parnell, with a very elegant Dedication to the Earl of Oxford; who, after all his struggles and dangers, then lived in retirement, still under the frown of a victorious faction, who could take no pleasure in

hearing his praise.

He gave the same year (1721) an edition of Shakspeare. His name was now of so much authority, that
Tonson thought himself entitled, by annexing it, to
demand a subscription of six guineas for Shakspeare's
plays in six quarto volumes; nor did his expectation
much deceive him; for of seven hundred and sisty
which he printed, he dispersed a great number at the
price proposed. The reputation of that edition indeed sunk afterwards so low, that one hundred and
forty copies were sold at sixteen shillings each.

On this undertaking, to which Pope was induced by a reward of two hundred and seventeen pounds twelve shillings, he seems never to have reslected afterwards without vexation; for Theobald, a man of heavy diligence, with very slender powers, first, in a book called Shakspeare Restored, and then in a formal edition, detected his deficiencies with all the insolence of victory; and, as he was now high enough to be seared and hated, Theobald had from other all the

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a haughty character.

From this time Pope became an enemy to editors, collaters, commentators, and verbal critics; and hoped to persuade the world, that he miscarried in this undertaking only by having a mind too great for such

minute employment.

Pope in his edition undoubtedly did many things wrong, and left many things undone; but let him not be defrauded of his due praise. He was the first that knew, at least the first that told, by what helps the text might be improved. If he inspected the early editions negligently, he taught others to be more accurate. In his Preface he expanded with great skill and elegance the character which had been given of Shakspeare by Dryden; and he drew the public attention upon his works, which, though often mentioned, had been little read.

Soon after the appearance of the *Miad*, refolving not to let the general kindness cool, he published proposals for a translation of the *Odyssey*, in five volumes, for five guineas. He was willing, however, now to have associates in his labour, being either weary with toiling upon another's thoughts, or having heard, as Ruffhead relates, that Fenton and Broome had already begun the work, and liking better to have them

confederates than rivals.

In the patent, instead of saying that he had transtated the Odyssey, as he had said of the Iliad, he says that he had undertaken a translation; and in the proposals the subscription is said to be not solely for his own use, but for that of two of his friends who have assisted him in this work.

In 1723, while he was engaged in this new version, he appeared before the Lords at the memorable trial of Bishop Atterbury, with whom he had lived in great familiarity, and frequent correspondence. Atterbury had honestly recommended to him the study

of the popish controversy, in hope of his conversion; to which Pope answered in a manner that cannot much recommend his principles, or his judgment. In questions and projects of learning, they agreed better. He was called at the trial to give an account of Atterbury's domestic life, and private employment, that it might appear how little time he had left for plots. Pope had but few words to utter, and in those few he made several blunders.

His Letters to Atterbury express the utmost esteem, tenderness, and gratitude: perhaps, says he, it is not only in this world that I may have cause to remember the Bishop of Rochester. At their last interview in the Tower, Atterbury presented him with a Bible.

Of the Odysfey Pope translated only twelve books; the rest were the work of Broome and Fenton: the notes were written wholly by Broome, who was not over-liberally rewarded. The Public was carefully kept ignorant of the several shares; and an account was subjoined at the conclusion, which is now known not to be true.

The first copy of Pope's books, with those of Fenton, are to be seen in the Museum. The parts of Pope are less interlined than the Hiad, and the latter books of the Hiad less than the former. He grew dexterous by practice, and every sheet enabled him to write the next with more facility. The books of Fenton have very sew alterations by the hand of Pope. Those of Broome have not been found; but Pope complained, as it is reported, that he had much trouble in correcting them.

His contract with Lintot was the fame as for the Iliad, except that only one hundred pounds were to be paid him for each volume. The number of subfcribers was five hundred and seventy-four, and of copies eight hundred and nineteen; so that his profit, when he had paid his affistants, was still very consi-

derable.

derable. The work was finished in 1725, and from that time he resolved to make no more translations.

The fale did not answer Lintot's expectation, and he then pretended to discover something of fraud in Pope, and commenced, or threatened, a suit in Chan-

cery.

On the English Odyssey a criticism was published by Spence, at that time Prelector of Potery at Oxford; a man whose learning was not very great, and whose mind was not very powerful. His criticism, however, was commonly just; what he thought, he thought rightly; and his remarks were recommended by his coolness and candour. In him Pope had the first experience of a critic without malevolence, who thought it as much his duty to display beauties as expose faults; who censured with respect, and praised with alacrity.

With this criticism Pope was so little offended, that he sought the acquaintance of the writer, who lived with him from that time in great familiarity, attended him in his last hours, and compiled memorials of his conversation. The regard of Pope recommended him to the great and powerful, and he obtained very

valuable preferments in the Church.

Not long after Pope was returning home from a vifit in a friend's coach, which, in passing a bridge, was overturned into the water; the windows were closed, and being unable to force them open, he was in danger of immediate death, when the postilion snatched him out by breaking the glass, of which the fragments cut two of his fingers in such a manner, that he lost their use.

Voltaire, who was then in England, fent him a Letter of Confolation. He had been entertained by Pope at his table, where he talked with fo much groffness wat Mrs Pope was driven from the room. Pope discovered, by a trick, that he was a spy for the Court, and never considered him as a man worthy of

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He foon afterwards (1727) joined with Swift, who was then in England, to publish three volumes of Miscellanies, in which amongst other things he inferted the Memoirs of a Parish Clerk, in ridicule of Burnet's importance in his own History, and a Debate upon Black and White Horfes, written in all the formalities of a legal process, by the affistance, as is said, of Mr Fortescue, afterwards Master of the Rolls. Before these Miscellanies is a preface signed by Swift and Pope but apparently written by Pope; in which he makes a ridiculous and romantic complaint of the robberies committed upon authors by the clandestine seizure and fale of their papers. He tells, in tragic strains, how the cabinets of the Sick and the closets of the Dead have been broke open and ransacked; as if those violences were often committed for papers of uncertain and accidental value, which are rarely provoked by real treasures; as if epigrams and effays were in danger where gold and diamonds are fafe. A cat, hunted for his musk, is, according to Pope's account, but the emblem of a wit winded by bookfellers.

His complaint, however, received some attestation; for the same year the Letters written by him to Mr. Cromwell, in his youth, were fold by Mrs Thomas to

Curll, who printed them.

In these Miscellanies was first published the Art of Sinking in Poetry, which, by such a train of consequences as usually passes in literary quarrels, gave in a short time, according to Pope's account, occasion to the Dunciad.

In the following year (1728) he began to put Atterbury's advice in practice; and shewed his satirical powers by publishing the Dunciad, one of his greatest and most elaborate performances, in which he endeavoured to fink into contempt all the writers by whom he had been attacked, and some others whom he thought unable to defend themselves.

At the head of the Dunces he placed poor Theobald, whom he accused of ingratitude; but whose real crime was supposed to be that of having revised Shakspeare more happily than himself. This satire had the effect which he intended, by blasting the characters which it touched. Ralph, who, unnecessarily interposing in the quarrel, got a place in a subsequent edition, complained that for a time he was in danger of starving, as the booksellers had no longer any con-

fidence in his capacity.

The prevalence of this poem was gradual and flow: the plan, if not wholly new, was little understood by common readers. Many of the allusions required illustration; the names were often expressed only by the initial and final letters, and, if they had been printed at length, were such as sew had known or recollected. The subject itself had nothing generally interesting, for whom did it concern to know that one or another scribbler was a dunce? If therefore it had been possible for those who were attacked to conceal their pain and their resentment, the Dunciad might have made its way very slowly in the world.

This, however, was not to be expected: every man is of importance to himself, and therefore, in his own opinion, to others; and, supposing the world already acquainted with all his pleasures and his pains, is perhaps the first to publish injuries or misfortunes, which had never been known unless related by himself, and at which those that hear them will only laugh; for no man sympathises with the sorrows of vanity.

The history of the Dunciad is very minutely related by Pope himself, in a Dedication which he wrote to

Lord Middlefex in the name of Savage.

"I will relate the war of the Dunces (for fo it has been commonly called), which began in the year 1727, and ended in 1730.

"When Dr Swift and Mr Pope thought it proper, for reasons specified in the Presace to their Miscel"lanies,

"lanies, to publish fuch little pieces of theirs as had " cafually got abroad, there was added to them the "Treatife of the Bathos, or the Art of Sinking in Poetry. "It happened that in one chapter of this piece the " feveral species of bad poets were ranged in claffes, "to which were prefixed almost all the letters of the " alphabet (the greatest part of them at random); "but fuch was the number of poets eminent in that "art, that some one or other took every letter to " himfelf; all fell into fo violent a fury, that, for half "a year or more, the common newspapers (in most " of which they had some property, as being hired " writers) were filled with the most abusive falsehoods " and fcurrilities they could possibly devise. A liberty "no way to be wondered at in those people, and in "those papers, that for many years, during the un-" controuled licence of the prefs, had afperfed almost "all the great characters of the age; and this with "impunity, their own persons and names being ut-"terly fecret and obfcure.

"This gave Mr Pope the thought, that he had now " fome opportunity of doing good, by detecting and "dragging into light these common enemies of man-"kind; fince to invalidate this universal flander, it " fufficed to shew what contemptible men were the " authors of it. He was not without hopes, that, by " manifesting the dulness of those who had only ma-"lice to recommend them, either the booksellers " would not find their account in employing them, " or the men themselves, when discovered, want cou-"rage to proceed in fo unlawful an occupation. This "it was that gave birth to the Dunciad; and he "thought it an happiness, that, by the late flood of " flander on himfelf, he had acquired fuch a pecu-" liar right over their names as was necessary to this " design.

"On the 12th of March, 1729, at St James's, that poem was prefented to the King and Queen (who Vol. IV.

"had before been pleased to read it) by the right honourable Sir Robert Walpole; and some days after the whole impression was taken and dispersed by several noblemen and persons of the first di-

of flinction.

"It is certainly a true observation, that no people are so impatient of censure as those who are the greatest slanderers, which was wonderfully exemplified on this occasion. On the day the book was first vended, a crowd of authors besieged the shop; intreaties, advices, threats of law and battery, nay cries of treason, were all employed to hinder the coming out of the Dunciad; on the other side, the booksellers and hawkers made as great efforts to procure it. What could a few poor authors do against so great a majority as the public? There was no stopping a torrent with a singer, so out it came,

"Many ludicrous circumstances attended it. The Dunces (for by this name they were called) held weekly clubs, to consult of hostilities against the author; one wrote a Letter to a great minister, as suring him Mr Pope was the greatest enemy the government had; and another bought his image in clay, to execute him in effigy, with which sad fort of satisfaction the gentlemen were a little comforted.

"Some false editions of the book having an owl in their frontispiece, the true one, to distinguish it, fixed in its stead an ass laden with authors. Then another surreptitious one being printed with the fame ass, the new edition in octavo returned for distinction to the owl again. Hence arose a great contest of booksellers against booksellers, and adriftements against advertisements; some recommending the edition of the owl, and others the edition of the ass; by which names they came to be distinguished.

" distinguished, to the great honour also of the gen-

Pope appears by this narrative to have contemplated his victory over the Dunces with great exultation; and such was his delight in the tumult which he had raised, that for a while his natural sensibility was suspended, and he read reproaches and invectives without emotion, considering them only as the necessary effects of that pain which he rejoiced in ha-

ving given.

It cannot however be concealed that, by his own confession, he was the aggressor; for nobody believes that the letters in the Bathos were placed at random; and it may be discovered that, when he thinks himself concealed, he indulges the common vanity of common men, and triumphs in those distinctions which he had affected to despise. He is proud that his book was presented to the King and Queen by the right honourable Sir Robert Walpole; he is proud that they had read it before; he is proud that the edition was taken off by the nobility and persons of the first distinction.

The edition of which he speaks was, I believe, that which by telling in the text the names and in the notes the characters of those whom he had satirised, was made intelligible and diverting. The critics had now declared their approbation of the plan; and the common reader began to like it without fear; those who were strangers to petty literature, and therefore unable to decypher initials and blanks, had now names and persons brought within their view; and delighted in the visible effect of those shafts of malice, which they had hitherto contemplated, as shot into the air.

Dennis, upon the fresh provocation now given him, renewed the enmity which had for a time been appealed by mutual civilities; and published remarks, which he had till then suppressed, upon the Rape of

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the Lock. Many more grumbled in fecret, or vented their refentment in the newspapers by epigrams or invectives.

Ducket, indeed, being mentioned as loving Burnet with piaus passion, pretended that his moral character was injured, and for some time declared his resolution to take vengeance with a cudgel. But Pope appealed him, by changing pious passion to cordial friendship, and by a note, in which he vehemently disclaims the malignity of meaning imputed to the first expression.

Aaron Hill, who was represented as diving for the prize, expostulated with Pope in a manner so much superior to all mean solicitation, that Pope was reduced to sneak and shaffle, sometimes to deny, and sometimes to apologize; he first endeavours to wound, and is then afraid to own that he meant a blow.

The Dunciad, in the complete edition, is addressed to Dr Swist: of the notes, part was written by Dr Arbuthnot, and an apologetical Letter was prefixed, signed by Cleland, but supposed to have been written

by Pope.

After this general war upon dulness, he seems to have indulged himself awhile in tranquillity; but his subsequent productions prove that he was not idle. He published (1731) a poem on Taste, in which he very particularly and severely criticises the house, the furniture, the gardens, and the entertainments of Timon, a man of great wealth and little taste. By Timon he was universally supposed, and by the Earl of Burlington, to whom the poem is addressed, was privately said, to mean the Duke of Chandos; a man perhaps too much delighted with pomp and show, but of a temper kind and beneficent, and who had consequently the voice of the public in his favour.

A violent outcry was therefore raised against the ingratitude and treachery of Pope, who was said to have

have been indebted to the patronage of Chandos for a present of a thousand pounds, and who gained the opportunity of insulting him by the kindness of his invitation.

The receipt of the thousand pounds Pope publicly denied; but from the reproach which the attack on a character so amiable brought upon him, he tried all means of escaping. The name of Cleland was again employed in an apology, by which no man was fatisfied; and he was at last reduced to shelter his temerity behind diffimulation, and endeavour to make that disbelieved which he never had confidence openly to deny. He wrote an exculpatory letter to the Duke, which was answered with great magnanimity, as by 2 man who accepted his excuse without believing his professions. He said, that to have ridiculed his taste, or his buildings, had been an indifferent action in another man; but that in Pope, after the reciprocal kindness that had been exchanged between them, it had been less easily excused.

Pope, in one of his Letters, complaining of the treatment which his poem had found, owns that such critics can intimidate him, nay almost perfuade him to write no more, which is a compliment this age deserves. The man who threatens the world is always ridiculous; for the world can easily go on without him, and in a short time will cease to miss him. I have heard of an idiot, who used to revenge his vexations by lying all night upon the bridge. There is nothing, fays Juvenal, that a man will not believe in his own favour. Pope had been flattered till he thought himfelf one of the moving powers in the fystem of life. When he talked of laying down his pen, those who fat round him intreated and implored, and felf-love did not fuffer him to fuspect that they went away and laughed.

The following year deprived him of Gay, a man whom he had known early, and whom he feemed to

love

love with more tenderness than any other of his literary friends. Pope was now forty-four years old; an age at which the mind begins less easily to admit new confidence, and the will to grow less flexible, and when therefore the departure of an old friend is very acute-

ly felt.

In the next year he lost his mother, not by an unexpected death, for she had lasted to the age of nine-ty-three; but she did not die unlamented. The filial piety of Pope was in the highest degree amiable and exemplary; his parents had the happiness of living till he was at the summit of poetical reputation, till he was at ease in his fortune, and without a rival in his same, and found no diminution of his respect or tenderness. Whatever was his pride, to them he was obedient; and whatever was his irritability, to them he was gentle. Life has, among its soothing and quiet comforts, sew things better to give than such a son.

One of the passages of Pope's life, which seems to deserve some enquiry, was a publication of Letters between him and many of his friends, which falling into the hands of Curll, a rapacious bookfeller of no good fame, were by him printed and fold. This volume containing some Letters from noblemen, Pope incited a profecution against him in the House of Lords for breach of privilege, and attended himself to stimulate the refentment of his friends. Curli appeared at the bar, and, knowing himself in no great danger, spoke of Pope with very little reverence. He has, faid Curll, a knack at versifying, but in prose I think myfelf a match for bim. When the orders of the House were examined, none of them appeared to have been infringed; Curll went away triumphant, and Pope was left to feek some other remedy.

Curll's account was, that one evening a man in a elergyman's gown, but with a lawyer's band, brought and offered to fale a number of printed volumes, which h

he found to be Pope's epistolary correspondence; that he asked no name, and was told none, but gave the price demanded, and thought himself authorised to

use his purchase to his own advantage.

That Curll gave a true account of the transaction, it is reasonable to believe, because no falsehood was ever detected; and when some years afterwards I mentioned it to Lintot, the son of Bernard, he declared his opinion to be, that Pope knew better than any body else how Curll obtained the copies, because another parcel was at the same time sent to himself, for which no price had ever been demanded, as he made known his resolution not to pay a porter, and consequently not to deal with a nameless agent.

Such care had been taken to make them public, that they were fent at once to two bookfellers; to Curll, who was likely to seize them as a prey, and to Lintot, who might be expected to give Pope information of the seeming injury. Lintot, I believe, did nothing; and Curll did what was expected. That to make them public was the only purpose may be reasonably supposed, because the numbers offered to sale by the private messengers shewed that hope of gain could not have been the motive of the impression.

It feems that Pope, being desirous of printing his Letters, and not knowing how to do, without imputation of vanity, what has in this country been done very rarely, contrived an appearance of compulsion; that when he could complain that his Letters were surreptitiously published, he might decently and defend

fively publish them himself.

Pope's private correspondence, thus promulgated, filled the nation with praises of his candour, tenderness, and benevolence, the purity of his purposes, and the fidelity of his friendship. There were some Letters which a very good or a very wife man would wish suppressed; but, as they had been already exposed, it was impracticable now to retract them.

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From the perusal of those Letters, Mr Allen first conceived the desire of knowing him; and with so much zeal did he cultivate the friendship which he had newly formed, that when Pope told his purpose of vindicating his own property by a genuine edition, he of-

fered to pay the cost.

This however Pope did not accept; but in time folicited a subscription for a Quarto volume, which appeared (1737) I believe, with sufficient profit. In the Preface he tells that his Letters were reposited in afriend's library, said to be the Earl of Oxford's, and that the copy thence stolen was sent to the press. The story was doubtless received with different degrees of credit. It may be suspected that the Preface to the Miscellanies was written to prepare the public for such an incident; and to strengthen this opinion, James Worsdale, a painter, who was employed in clandestine negotiations, but whose veracity was very doubtful, declared that he was the messenger who carried, by Pope's direction, the books to Curll.

When they were thus published and avowed, asthey had relation to recent facts, and persons either then living or not yet forgotten, they may be supposed to have found readers; but as the facts were minute, and the characters being either private or literary, were little known, or little regarded, they awakened no popular kindness or resentment; the book neverbecame much the subject of conversation; some readit as contemporary history, and some perhaps as a model of epistolary language; but those who read it didnot talk of it. Not much therefore was added by itto same or envy; nor do I remember that it produced

either public praise, or public censure.

It had however, in some degree, the recommendation of novelty. Our language has few Letters, except those of statesmen. Howel indeed, about a century ago, published his Letters, which are commended by Morhoff, and which alone of his hundred volumes

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continue his memory. Loveday's Letters were printed only once; those of Herbert and Suckling are hardly known. Mrs Philip's [Orinda's] are equally neglected; and those of Walsh seem written as exercises, and were never sent to any living mistress or friend. Pope's epistolary excellence had an open field;

he had no English rival, living or dead.

Pope is feen in this collection as connected with the other contemporary wits, and certainly fuffers no difgrace in the comparison; but it must be remembered. that he had the power of favouring himfelf: he might have originally had publication in his mind, and have written with care, or have afterwards felected those which he had most happily conceived, or most diligently laboured; and I know not whether there does not appear fomething more studied and artificial in his productions than the rest, except one long Letter by Bolingbroke, composed with all the skill and industry of a professed author. It is indeed not easy to distinguish affectation from habit; he that has once studioully formed a ftyle, rarely writes afterwards with complete eafe. Pope may be faid to write always with his reputation in his head; Swift perhaps like a man who remembered that he was writing to Pope; but Arbuthnot like one who lets thoughts drop from his pen as they rife into his mind.

Before these Letters appeared, he published the first part of what he persuaded himself to think a system of Ethics, under the title of an Essay on Man; which, if his Letter to Swift (of Sept. 14, 1725) he rightly explained by the commentator, had been eight years under his consideration, and of which he seems to have desired the success with great solicitude. He had now many open and doubtless many secret enemies. The Dunces were yet smarting with the war; and the superiority which he publicly arrogated, dis-

posed the world to wish his humiliation.

All this he knew, and against all this he provided.

His own name, and that of his friend to whom the work is inscribed, were in the first editions carefully suppressed; and the poem, being of a new kind, was ascribed to one or another, as favour determined, or conjecture wandered; it was given, says Warburton, to every man, except him only who could write it. Those who like only when they like the author, and who are under the dominion of a name, condemned it; and those admired it who are willing to scatter praise at random, which while it is unappropriated excites no envy. Those friends of Pope, that were trusted with the secret, went about lavishing honours on the newborn poet, and hinting that Pope was never so much in danger from any former rival.

To those authors whom he had personally offended, and to those whose opinion the world considered as decisive, and whom he suspected of envy or malevolence, he sent his essay as a present before publication, that they might defeat their own enmity by praises, which they could not afterwards decently retract.

With these precautions, in 1733 was published the first part of the Essay on Man. There had been for some time a report that Pope was busy upon a System of Morality; but this design was not discovered in the new poem, which had a form and a title with which its readers were unacquainted. Its reception was not uniform; some thought it a very imperfect piece, though not without good lines. While the author was unknown, some, as will always happen, savoured him as an adventurer, and some censured him as an intruder; but all thought him above neglect; the sale increased, and editions were multiplied.

The subsequent editions of the first Epistle exhibited two memorable corrections. At first, the poet

and his friend

Expatiate freely o'er this scene of man, A mighty maze of walks without a plan.

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A mighty maze, but not without a plan :

for, if there were no plan, it was in vain to describe or to trace the maze.

The other alteration was of these lines;

And spite of pride, and in thy reason's spite, One truth is clear, whatever is, is right:

but having afterwards discovered, or been shewn, that the truth which subsisted in spite of reason could not bevery clear, he substituted

And spite of pride, in erring reason's spite.

To fuch overfights will the most vigorous mind be liable, when it is employed at once upon argument and poetry.

The fecond and third Epistles were published; and Pope was, I believe, more and more suspected of writing them; at last, in 1734, he avowed the fourth,

and claimed the honour of a moral poet.

In the conclusion it is fufficiently acknowledged, that the doctrine of the Essay on Man was received from Bolingbroke, who is faid to have ridiculed Pope, among those who enjoyed his confidence, as having adopted and advanced principles of which he did not perceive the confequence, and as blindly propagating opinions contrary to his own, That those communications had been confolidated into a scheme regularly drawn, and delivered to Pope, from whom it returned only transformed from profe to verfe, has been reported, but hardly can be true, The Essay plainly appears the fabric of a poet: what Bolingbroke supplied could be only the first principles; the order, illustration, and embellishments must all be Pope's. Thefe

These principles it is not my business to clear from obscurity, dogmatism, or falsehood; but they were not immediately examined; philosophy and poetry have not often the same readers; and the essay abounded in splendid amplifications and sparkling sentences, which were read and admired, with no great attention to their ultimate purpose; its slowers caught the eye, which did not see what the gay soliage concealed, and for a time flourished in the sunshine of universal approbation. So little was any evil tendency discovered, that, as innocence is unsuspicious, many read it for a manual of piety.

Its reputation foon invited a translator. It was first turned into French prose, and afterwards by Refnel into verse. Both translations fell into the hands of Crousaz, who first, when he had the version in prose, wrote a general censure, and afterwards reprinted Resnel's version, with particular remarks up-

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on every paragraph.

Crousaz was a professor of Switzerland, eminent for his treatise of Logic, and his Examen de Pyrrhonisme, and, however little known or regarded here, was no mean antagonist. His mind was one of those in which philosophy and piety are happily united. He was accustomed to argument and disquisition, and perhaps was grown too desirous of detecting faults; but his intentions were always right, his opinions were

folid, and his religion pure.

His inceffant vigilance for the promotion of piety disposed him to look with distrust upon all metaphyfical systems of Theology and all schemes of virtue and happiness purely rational; and therefore it was not long before he was perfuaded that the positions of Pope, as they terminated for the most part in natural religion, were intended to draw mankind away from revelation, and to represent the whole course of things as a necessary concatenation of indissoluble fatality; and it is undeniable, that in many passages a religious

eye may eafily discover expressions not very favourable

to morals, or to liberty.

About this time Warburton began to make his appearance in the first ranks of learning. He was a man of vigorous faculties, a mind fervid and vehement, supplied by incessant and unlimited enquiry, with wonderful extent and variety of knowledge, which yet had not oppressed his imagination, nor clouded his perspicacity. To every work he brought a memory full fraught, together with a fancy fertile of original combinations, and at once exerted the powers of the scholar, the reasoner, and the wit. But his knowledge was too multifarious to be always exact, and his purfuits were too eager to be always cautious. His abilities gave him an haughty confidence, which he difdained to conceal or mollify; and his impatience of opposition disposed him to treat his adversaries with fuch contemptuous fuperiority as made his readers commonly his enemies, and excited against the advocate the wishes of some who favoured the cause. He feems to have adopted the Roman Emperor's determination, oderint dum metuant; he used no allurements of gentle language, but wished to compel rather than perfuade.

His style is copious without selection, and forcible without neatness; he took the words that presented themselves; his diction is coarse and impure, and his

fentences are unmeasured.

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He had, in the early part of his life, pleased himfelf with the notice of inferior wits, and corresponded with the enemies of Pope. A Letter was produced, when he had perhaps himself forgotten it, in which he tells Concanen, "Dryden I observe borrows for want "of leisure, and Pope for want of genius: Milton out "of pride, and Addison out of modesty." And when Theobald published Shakspeare, in opposition to Pope, the best notes were supplied by Warburton.

But the time was now come when Warburton was Vol. IV.

to change his opinion, and Pope was to find a defender in him who had contributed fo much to the exaltation of his rival.

The arrogance of Warburton excited against him every artifice of offence, and therefore it may be supposed that his union with Pope was censured as hypocritical inconstancy; but surely to think differently, at different times, of poetical merit, may be easily allowed Such opinions are often admitted, and dismissed, without nice examination. Who is there that has not found reason for changing his mind about questions of greater importance?

Warburton, whatever was his motive, undertook, without folicitation, to rescue Pope from the talons of Crousaz, by freeing him from the imputation of savouring satality, or rejecting revelation; and from month to month continued a vindication of the Essay on Man, in the literary journal of that time called

The Republic of Letters.

Pope, who probably began to doubt the tendency of his own work, was glad that the positions, of which he perceived himself not to know the full meaning, could by any mode of interpretation be made to mean well. How much he was pleased with his gratuitous desender, the following Letter evidently shews:

"SIR,

March 24, 1743.

"I have just received from Mr R. two more of your Letters. It is in the greatest hurry imaginable that I write this; but I cannot help thanking you in particular for your third Letter, which is so extremely clear, short, and full, that I think Mr Croussiaz ought never to have another answer, and described not so good an one. I can only say, you do him too shuch honour, and me too much right, so odd as the expression seems; for you have made my fystem as clear as I ought to have done, and could not. It is indeed the same system as mine, but illustrated

"firated with a ray of your own, as they fay our na"tural body is the fame still when it is glorisied. I
"am sure I like it better than I did before, and so
"will every man else. I know I meant just what you
explain; but I did not explain my own meaning so
well as you. You understand me as well as I do myself: but you express me better than I could express
myself. Pray accept the sincerest acknowledgments.
I cannot but wish these Letters were put together in
one Book, and intend (with your leave) to procure
a translation of part, at least, of all of them into
French; but I shall not proceed a step without your
consent and opinion, &c."

By this fond and eager acceptance of an exculpatory comment, Pope testified that, whatever might be the feeming or real import of the principles which he had received from Bolingbroke, he had not intentionally attacked religion; and Bolingbroke, if he meant to make him without his own consent an instrument of mischief, found him now engaged with his eyes open on the side of truth.

It is known that Bolingbroke concealed from Pope his real opinions. He once discovered them to Mr Hooke, who related them again to Pope, and was told by him that he must have mistaken the meaning of what he heard; and Bolingbroke, when Pope's uneafiness incited him to desire an explanation, declared that Hooke had misunderstood him.

Bolingbroke hated Warburton, who had drawn his pupil from him; and a little before Pope's death they had a dispute, from which they parted with mutual aversion.

From this time Pope lived in the closest intimacy with his commentator, and amply rewarded his kindness and his zeal; for he introduced him to Mr Murray, by whose interest he became preacher at Lincoln's Inn, and to Mr Allen, who gave him his niece and his estate, and by consequence a bishopric. When he F 2

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died, he left him the property of his works; a legacy which may be reasonably estimated at four thousand

pounds.

Pope's fondness for the Essay on Man appeared by his desire of its propagation. Dobson, who had gained reputation by his version of Prior's Solomon, was employed by him to translate it into Latin verse, and was for that purpose some time at Twickenham; but he left his work, whatever was the reason, unfinished; and by Benson's invitation, undertook the longer task of Paradise Lost. Pope then desired his friend to find a scholar who should turn his Essay into Latin prose; but no such performance has ever appeared.

Pope lived at this time among the great, with that reception and respect to which his works entitled him, and which he had not impaired by any private misconduct or factious partiality. Though Bolingbroke was his friend, Walpole was not his enemy; but treated him with so much consideration as, at his request, to solicit and obtain from the French Minister an abbey for Mr Southcot, whom he considered himself as obliged to reward, by this exertion of his interest, for the benefit which he had received from his attendance

in a long illnefs.

It was faid, that, when the Court was at Richmond, Queen Caroline had declared her intention to visit him. This may have been only a careless effusion, thought on no more: the report of such notice, however, was soon in many mouths; and, if I do not forget or misapprehend Savage's account, Pope, pretending to decline what was not yet offered, less this house for a time, not, I suppose, for any other reason than less the should be thought to stay at home in expectation of an honour which would not be conferred. He was therefore angry at Swist, who represents him as refusing the wists of a Queen, because he knew that what had never been offered, had never been refused.

Beside the general system of morality supposed to

be contained in the Essay on Man, it was his intention to write distinct poems upon the different duties or conditions of life; one of which is the Epistle to Lord Bathurst (1733) on the Use of Riches, a piece on which he declared great labour to have been bestowed *.

Into this poem some incidents are historically thrown, and some known characters are introduced, with others of which it is difficult to fay how far they are real or fictitious; but the praise of Kyrl, the Man of Ross, deserves particular examination, who, after a long and pompous enumeration of his public works and private charities, is faid to have diffused all those bleffings from five hundred a year. Wonders are willingly told, and willingly heard. The truth is, that Kyrl was a man of known integrity, and active benevolence, by whose folicitation the wealthy were perfuaded to pay contributions to his charitable schemes; this influence he obtained by an example of liberality exerted to the utmost extent of his power, and was thus enabled to give more than he had. This account Mr Victor received from the minister of the place, and I have preserved it, that the praise of a good man being made more credible, may be more folid. Narrations of romantic and impracticable virtue will be read with wonder, but that which is unattainable is recommended in vain; that good may be endeavoured, it must be shewn to be possible.

This is the only piece in which the author has given a hint of his religion, by ridiculing the ceremony of burning the pope, and by mentioning with fome in-

dignation the infcription on the Monument.

When this poem was first published, the dialogue, having no letters of direction, was perplexed and obficure. Pope seems to have written with no very diffinct idea; for he calls that an Epistle to Barburst, in which Bathurst is introduced as speaking.

* Spence.

He afterwards (1734) inscribed to Lord Cobham his Characters of Men, written with close attention to the operations of the mind and modifications of life. In this poem he has endeavoured to establish and exemplify his favourite theory of the Ruling Passion, by which he means an original direction of desire to some particular object, an innate affection which gives all action a determinate and invariable tendency, and operates upon the whole system of life, either openly, or more secretly by the intervention of some accidental

or subordinate propension.

Of any passion, thus innate and irresistible, the existence may reasonably be doubted. Human characters are by no means constant; men change by change
of place, of fortune, of acquaintance; he who is at
one time a lover of pleasure, is at another a lover of
money. Those indeed who attain any excellence,
commonly spend life in one pursuit; for excellence is
not often gained upon easier terms. But to the paraticular species of excellence men are directed, not by
an ascendant planet or predominating humour, but by
the first book which they read, some early conversation which they heard, or some accident which excited ardour and emulation.

It must be at least allowed that this Ruling Passion, antecedent to reason and observation, must have an object independent on human contrivance; for there can be no natural desire of artificial good. No man therefore can be born, in the strict acceptation, a lover of money; for he may be born where money does not exist; nor can he be born, in a moral sense, a lover of his country; for society, politically regulated, is a state contradistinguished from a state of nature; and any attention to that coalition of interests which makes the happiness of a country, is possible only to those whom enquiry and resection have enabled to comprehend it.

This doctrine is in itself pernicious as well as false; its

its tendency is to produce the belief of a kind of moral predeftination, or over-ruling principle which cannot be resisted; he that admits it, is prepared to comply with every desire that caprice or opportunity shall excite, and to flatter himself that he submits only to the lawful dominion of Nature, in obeying the resistant less authority of his Ruling Passion.

Pope has formed his theory with fo little skill, that in the examples by which he illustrates and confirms it, he has confounded passions, appetites, and habits.

To the Characters of Men he added foon after, in an epistle supposed to have been addressed to Martha Blount, but which the last edition has taken from her, the Characters of Women. This poem, which was laboured which great diligence, and in the author's opinion with great success, was neglected at its first publication, as the commentator supposes, because the public was informed by an advertisement, that it contained no Character drawn from the Life; an affertion which Pope probably did not expect or wish to have been believed, and which he soon gave his readers sufficient reason to distrust, by telling them in a note, that the work was imperfect, because part of his subject was Vice too high to be yet exposed.

The time however foon came, in which it was fafe to display the Duchess of Marlborough under the name of Atossa, and her character was inserted, his

no great honour to the writer's gratitude.

He published from time to time (between 1730 and 1740) Imitations of different poems of Horace, generally with his name, and once as was suspected without it. What he was upon moral principles ashamed to own, he ought to have suppressed. Of these pieces it is useless to settle the dates, as they had seldom much relation to the times, and perhaps had been long in his hands.

This mode of imitation, in which the ancients are familiarifed, by adapting their fentiments to modern topics.

topics, by making Horace say of Shakspeare what he originally said of Ennius, and accommodating his satires on Pantolabus and Nomentanus to the flatterers and prodigals of our own time, was first practised in the reign of Charles the Second by Oldham and Rochester, at least I remember no instances more ancient. It is a kind of middle composition between translation and original design, which pleases when the thoughts are unexpectedly applicable, and the parallels lucky. It seems to have been Pope's favourite amusement; for he has carried it further than any former poet.

He published likewise a revival, in smoother numbers, of Dr Donne's Satires, which was recommended to him by the Duke of Shrewsbury and the Earl of Oxford. They made no great impression on the public. Pope seems to have known their imbecility, and therefore suppressed them while he was yet contending to rise in reputation, but ventured them when he thought their desiciencies more likely to be imputed

to Donne than to himfelf.

The Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot, which seems to be derived in its first design from Boileau's Address a some Esprit, was published in January 1735, about a month before the death of him to whom it is inscribed. It is to be regretted that either honour or pleasure should have been missed by Arbuthnot; a man estimable for his egarning, amiable for his life, and venerable for his piety.

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Arbuthnot was a man of great comprehension, skilful in his profession, versed in the sciences, acquainted with ancient literature, and able to animate his mass of knowledge by a bright and active imagination; ascholar with great brilliancy of wit; a wit, who, in the crowd of life, retained and discovered a noble

ardour of religious zeal.

In this poem Pope seems to reckon with the public. He vindicates himself from censures; and with dignity, dignity, rather than arrogance, enforces his own claims

to kindness and respect.

Into this poem are interwoven feveral paragraphs which had been before printed as a fragment, and among them the fatirical lines upon Addison, of which the last couplet has been twice corrected. It was at first,

Who would not smile if such a man there be? Who would not laugh if Addison were he?

Then,

Who would not grieve if such a man there be? Who would not laugh if Addison were he?

At last it is,

Who but must laugh if such a man there be? Who would not weep if Atticus were he?

He was at this time at open war with Lord Hervey, who had diffinguished himself as a steady adherent to the Ministry; and, being offended with a contemptuous answer to one of his pamphlets, had summoned Pulteney to a duel. Whether he or Pope made the first attack, perhaps cannot now be easily known: he had written an invective against Pope, whom he calls, Hard as thy heart, and as thy birth obscure; and hints that his father was a hatter. To this Pope wrote a reply in verse and prose: the verses are in this poem; and the prose, though it was never sent, is printed among his Letters, but to a cool reader of the present time exhibits nothing but tedious malignity.

His last Satires, of the general kind, were two Dialogues, named from the year in which they were published Seventeen Hundred and Thirty eight. In these poems many are praised and many are reproached.

Pope

Pope was then entangled in the opposition; a follower of the Prince of Wales, who dined at his house, and the friend of many who obstructed and censured the conduct of the Ministers. His political partiality was too plainly shewn; he forgot the prudence with which he passed, in his earlier years, uninjured and unoffending through much more violent conflicts of faction.

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In the first Dialogue, having an opportunity of praifing Allen of Bath, he asked his leave to mention him as a man not illustrious by any merit of his ancestors, and called him in his verses low-born Allen. Men are seldom fatisfied with praise introduced or followed by any mention of defect. Allen seems not to have taken any pleasure in his epithet, which was afterwards softened into bumble Allen.

In the fecond Dialogue he took fome liberty with one of the Fones, among others; which Fon, in a reply to Lyttelton, took an opportunity of repaying, by reproaching him with the friendship of a lampooner, who scattered his ink without fear or decency, and against whom he hoped the resentment of the Legisla-

ture would quickly be discharged.

About this time Paul Whitehead, a small poet, was fummoned before the Lords for a poem called Manners, together with Dodsley his publisher. Whitehead, who hung loose upon society, sculked and escaped; but Dodsley's shop and family made his appearance necessary. He was, however, soon dismissed; and the whole process was probably intended rather to intimidate Pope than to punish Whitehead.

Pope never afterwards attempted to join the patriot with the poet, nor drew his pen upon statesmen. That he desisted from his attempts of reformation is imputed, by his commentator, to his despair of prevailing over the corruption of the time. He was not likely to have been ever of opinion that the dread of his fatire would countervail the love of power or of money;

formidable, and gratified fometimes his pride, and fometimes his refertment; till at last he began to think he should be more safe, if he were less busy.

The Memoirs of Scriblerus, published about this time, extend only to the first book of a work, projected in concert by Pope, Swift, and Arbuthnot, who used to meet in the time of Queen Anne, and denominated themselves the Scriblerus Club. Their purpose was to censure the abuses of learning by a sictitious Life of an infatuated Scholar. They were dispersed; the design was never completed; and Warburton laments its miscarriage, as an event very disastrous to polite letters.

If the whole may be estimated by this specimen, which seems to be the production of Arbuthnot, with a sew touches perhaps by Pope, the want of more will not be much lamented; for the sollies which the writer ridicules are so little practised, that they are not known; nor can the satire be understood but by the learned: he raises phantoms of absurdity, and then drives them away. He cures diseases that were never selt.

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For this reason this joint production of three great writers has never obtained any notice from mankind; it has been little read, or when read has been forgotten, as no man could be wifer, better, or merrier, by remembering it.

The design cannot boast of much originality; for, besides its general resemblance to Don Quiwote, there will be found in it particular imitations of the History of Mr Ousse.

Swift carried fo much of it into Ireland as supplied him with hints for his Travels; and with those the world might have been contented, though the rest had been suppressed.

Pope had fought for images and fentiments in a region not known to have been explored by many

other

other of the English writers; he had consulted the modern writers of Latin poetry, a class of authors whom Boileau endeavoured to bring into contempt, and who are too generally neglected. Pope, however, was not ashamed of their acquaintance, nor ungrateful for the advantages which he might have derived from A fmall felection from the Italians who wrote in Latin had been published at London, about the latter end of the last century, by a man who concealed his name, but whom his Preface shews to have been well qualified for his undertaking. This collection Pope amplified by more than half, and (1740) published it in two volumes, but injuriously omitted his predecesfor's preface. To these books, which had nothing but the mere text, no regard was paid, the authors were still neglected, and the editor was neither praised nor cenfured.

He did not fink into idleness; he had planned a work, which he confidered as subsequent to his Essay on Man, of which he has given this account to Dr Swift.

" March 25, 1736.

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"IF ever I write any more Epistles in verse, one " of them shall be addressed to you. I have long concerted it, and begun it; but I would make what bears your name as finished as my last work ought to be, that is to fay, more finished than any of the " reft. The fubject is large, and will divide into four " Epiftles, which naturally follow the Effay on Man, viz. 1. Of the Extent and Limits of Human Rea-" fon and Science. 2. A View of the useful and "therefore attainable, and of the unufeful and there-" fore unattainable Arts. 3. Of the Nature, Ends, "Application, and Use of different Capacities. 4. "Of the Use of Learning, of the Science, of the " World, and of Wit. It will conclude with a fatire " against

against the Misapplication of all these, exemplified

by Pictures, Characters, and Examples."

This work in its full extent, being now afflicted with an afthma, and finding the powers of life gradually declining, he had no longer courage to undertake; but, from the materials which he had provided, he added, at Warburton's request, another book to the Dunciad, of which the design is to ridicule such studies as are either hopeless or useless, as either pursue what is unattainable, or what, if it be attained, is of no use.

When this book was printed (1742) the laurel had been for some time upon the head of Cibber; a man whom it cannot be supposed that Pope could regard with much kindness or esteem, though in one of the Imitations of Horace he has liberally enough praised the Careless Husband. In the Dineiad, among other worthless scribblers, he had mentioned Cibber; who, in his Apology, complains of the great poet's unkindness as more injurious, because, says he, I never bave

offended him.

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It might have been expected that Pope should have been, in some degree, mollissed by this submissive gentleness; but no such consequence appeared. Though he condescended to commend Cibber once, he mentioned him afterwards contemptuously in one of his Satires, and again in his Epistle to Arbuthnot; and in the fourth book of the Dunciod attacked him with acrimony, to which the provocation is not easily discoverable. Perhaps he imagined that, in ridiculing the Laureat, he satirised those by whom the laurel had been given, and gratified that ambitious petulance with which he affected to insult the great.

The feverity of this fatire left Cibber no longer any patience. He had confidence enough in his own powers to believe that he could diffurb the quiet of his adversary, and doubtless did not want instigators, who, without any care about the victory, defired to

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amuse themselves by looking on the contest. He therefore gave the town a pamphlet, in which he declares his resolution from that time never to bear another blow without returning it, and to tire out his adversary by perseverance, if he cannot conquer him

by strength.

The inceffant and unappeafable malignity of Pope he imputes to a very distant cause. After the Three Hours after Marriage had been driven off the stage. by the offence which the mummy and crocodile gave the audience, while the exploded scene was yet fresh in memory, it happened that Cibber played Bayes in the Rehearfal; and, as it had been usual to enliven the part by the mention of any recent theatrical transactions, he faid, that he once thought to have introduced his lovers disguised in a Mummy and a Crocodile. "This," fays he, " was received with loud claps, which indicated contempt of the play." Pope, who was behind the fcenes, meeting him as he left the stage, attacked him, as he fays, with all the virulence of a Wit out of his fenfes; to which he replied, " that he would take no other notice of what was faid by of fo particular a man than to declare, that, as often as he played that part, he would repeat the fame provocation."

He shews his opinion to be, that Pope was one of the authors of the play which he so zealously defended; and adds an idle story of Pope's behaviour at a

tavern.

The pamphlet was written with little power of thought or language, and, if suffered to remain without notice, would have been very soon forgotten. Pope had now been enough acquainted with human life to know, if his passion had not been too powerful for his understanding, that, from a contention like his with Cibber, the world seeks nothing but diversion, which is given at the expence of the higher character. When Cibber lampooned Pope, curiosity was excited;

excited; what Pope would fay of Cibber nobody enquired, but in hope that Pope's afperity might betray

his pain and leffen his dignity.

He should therefore have suffered the pamphlet to slutter and die, without confessing that it stung him. The dishonour of being shewn as Cibber's antagonist could never be compensated by the victory. Cibber had nothing to lose; when Pope had exhausted all his malignity upon him, he would rise in the esteem both of his friends and his enemies. Silence only could have made him despicable; the blow which did not appear to be felt, would have been struck in vain.

But Pope's irrascibility prevailed, and he resolved to tell the whole English world that he was at war with Cibber; and to shew that he thought him no common adversary, he prepared no common vengeance; he published a new edition of the Dunciad, in which he degraded Theobald from his painful pre-eminence, and enthroned Cibber in his stead. Unhappily the two heroes were of opposite characters, and Pope was unwilling to lose what he had already written; he has therefore deprayed his poem by giving to Cibber the old books, the sold pedantry and sluggish pertinacity of Theobald.

Pope was ignorant enough of his own interest, to make another change, and introduced Osborne contending for the prize among the booksellers. Osborne was a man entirely destitute of shame, without sense of any disgrace but that of poverty. He told me, when he was doing that which raised Pope's resentment, that he should be put into the Dunciad; but he had the sate of Cassandra; I gave no credit to his prediction, till in time I saw it accomplished. The shafts of satire were directed equally in vain against Cibber and Osborne; being repelled by the impenetrable impudence of one, and deadened by the impassive dulness of the other. Pope confessed his own pain by his anger; but he gave no pain to those who

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had provoked him. He was able to hurt none but himfelf; by transferring the fame ridicule from one to another, he destroyed its efficacy; for, by shewing that what he had said of one he was ready to say of another, he reduced himself to the infignificance of his own magpye, who from his cage calls cuckold at a venture.

Cibber, according to his engagement, repaid the Dunciad with another pamphlet, which, Pope faid, would be as good as a dose of hartsborn to him; but his tongue and his heart were at variance. I have heard Mr Richardson relate, that he attended his father the painter on a visit, when one of Cibber's pamphletscame into the hands of Pope, who said, These things are my diversion. They sat by him while he perused it, and saw his features writhen with anguish; and young Richardson said to his father, when they returned, that he hoped to be preserved from such diversion as had been that day the lot of Pope.

From this time, finding his difeases more oppressive, and his vital powers gradually declining, he no longer strained his faculties with any original composition, nor proposed any other employment for his remaining life, than the revisal and correction of his former works; in which he received advice and affistance from Warburton, whom he appears to have trusted

and honoured in the highest degree.

He laid aside his Epic Poem, perhaps without much loss to mankind; for his hero was Brutus the Trojan, who, according to a ridiculous siction, established a colony in Britain. The subject therefore was of the sabulous age; the actors were a race upon whom imagination has been exhausted, and attention wearied, and to whom the mind will not easily be recalled, when it is invited in blank verse, which Pope had adopted with great imprudence, and, I think, without due consideration of the nature of our language. The sketch is, at least in part, preserved by Russhead; by which

which it appears, that Pope was thoughtless enough to model the names of his heroes with terminations not consistent with the time or country in which he

places them.

He lingered through the next year; but perceived himself, as he expresses it, going down the hill. He had for at least five years been afflicted with an asthma, and other disorders, which his physicians were unable to relieve. Towards the end of his life he consulted Dr Thomson, a man who had, by large promises, and free censures of the common practice of physic, forced himself up into sudden reputation. Thomson declared his distemper to be a dropsy, and evacuated part of the water by tincture of jalap; but consessed that his belly did not subside. Thomson had many enemies, and Pope was persuaded to dismiss him.

While he was yet capable of amusement and conversation, as he was one day sitting in the air with Lord Bolingbroke and Lord Marchmont, he faw his favourite Martha Blount at the bottom of the terrace, and asked Lord Bolingbroke to go and hand her up. Bolingbroke, not liking his errand, croffed his legs. and fat still; but Lord Marchmont, who was younger and lefs captious, waited on the Lady; who, when he came to her, asked, What, is he not dead yet? She is faid to have neglected him, with shameful unkindness, in the latter time of his decay; yet, of the little which he had to leave, she had a very great part. Their acquaintance began early; the life of each was pictured on the other's mind; their conversation therefore was endearing, for when they met, there was an immediate coalition of congenial notions. Perhaps he confidered her unwillingness to approach the chamber of fickness as female weakness, or human frailty; perhaps he was confcious to himself of pee. vishness and impatience, or, though he was offended by her inattention, might yet consider her merit as overbalancing her fault; and, if he had fuffered his heart abidw

heart to be alienated from her, he could have found nothing that might fill her place; he could have only thrunk within himfelf; it was too late to transfer his

confidence or fondness.

In May 1744, his death was approaching *; on the fixth, he was all day delirious, which he mentioned four days afterwards as a sufficient humiliation of the vanity of man; he afterwards complained of feeing things as through a curtain, and in false colours; and one day, in the presence of Dodsley, asked what arm it was that came out from the wall. He faid, that his greatest inconvenience was inability to think.

Bolingbroke fometimes wept over him in this state of helpless decay; and being told by Spence, that Pope, at the intermission of his deliriousness, was always faying fomething kind either of his prefent or absent friends, and that his humanity seemed to have furvived his understanding, answered, "It has fo." And added, "I never in my life knew a man that had of fo tender a heart for his particular friends, or more se general friendship for mankind." At another time he faid, "I have known Pope thefe thirty years, and " value myself more in his friendship than"-his grief then suppressed his voice.

Pope expressed, undoubting confidence of a future Being asked by his friend Mr Hooke, a papist, whether he would not die like his father and mother, and whether a prieft should not be called, he answered, at I do not think it effential, but it will be very right; s and I thank you for putting me in mind of it."

In the morning, after the priest had given him the last facraments, he faid, "There is nothing that is " meritorious but virtue and friendship, and indeed

" friendship itself is only a part of virtue."

He died in the evening of the thirtieth day of May, 1744, fo placidly, that the attendants did not discern

Twickenham, near his father and mother, where a monument has been erected to him by his commenta-

tor, the Bishop of Gloucester.

He left the care of his papers to his executors, first to Lord Bolingbroke, and if he should not be living to the Earl of Marchmont, undoubtedly expecting them to be proud of the trust, and eager to extend his fame. But let no man dream of influence beyond his life. After a decent time, Dodsley the bookfeller went to solicit preference as the publisher, and was told that the parcel had not been yet inspected; and whatever was the reason, the world has been dif-

appointed of what was referved for the next age.

He loft, indeed, the favour of Bolingbroke by 2 kind of posthumous offence. The political pamphlet called The Patriot King, had been put into his hands that he might procure the impression of a very few copies, to be distributed according to the author's direction among his friends, and Pope affured him that no more had been printed than were allowed; but, foon after his death, the printer brought and refigned a complete edition of fifteen hundred copies, which Pope had ordered him to print, and to retain in fecret. He kept, as was observed, his engagement to Pope better than Pope had kept it to his friend; and nothing was known of the transaction, till, upon the death of his employer, he thought himself obliged to deliver the books to the right owner, who, with great indignation, made a fire in his yard, and delivered the whole impression to the flames.

Hitherto nothing had been done which was not naturally dictated by resentment of violated faith; resentment more acrimonious, as the violator had been more loved or more trusted. But here the anger might have stopped; the injury was private, and there

was little danger from the example.

Bolingbroke, however, was not yet fatisfied; his

thirst of vengeance excited him to blast the memory of the man over whom he had wept in his last struge gles; and he employed Mallet, another friend of Pope, to tell the tale to the public, with all its aggravations. Warburton, whose heart was warm with his legacy, and tender by the recent separation, thought it proper for him to interpose; and undertook, not indeed to vindicate the action, for breach of trust has always fomething criminal, but to extenuate it by an Having advanced what cannot be denied, that moral obliquity is made more or less excusable by the motives that produce it, he enquires what evil purpose could have induced Pope to break his promise. He could not delight his vanity by usurping the work, which, though not fold in shops, had been shewn to a number more than fufficient to preferve the author's claim; he could not gratify his avarice; for he could not fell his plunder till Bolingbroke was dead; and even then, if the copy was left to another, his fraud would be defeated, and if left to himself, would be useless.

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Warburton therefore supposes, with great appearance of reason, that the irregularity of his conduct proceeded wholly from his zeal for Bolingbroke, who might perhaps have destroyed the pamphlet, which Pope thought it his duty to preserve, even without its author's approbation. To this apology an answer was written in a Letter to the most impudent man living.

He brought some reproach upon his own memory by the petulant and contemptuous mention made in his will of Mr Allen, and an affected repayment of his benefactions. Mrs Blount, as the known friend and favourite of Pope, had been invited to the house of Allen, where she comported herself with such indecent arrogance, that she parted from Mrs Allen in a state of irreconcileable dislike, and the door was for ever barred against her. This exclusion she resented with so much bitterness as to resuse any legacy from

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Pope, unless he left the world with a disavowal of obligation to Allen. Having been long under her dominion, now tottering in the decline of life, and unable to resist the violence of her temper, or, perhaps with the prejudice of a lover, persuaded that she had suffered improper treatment, he complied with her demand, and polluted his will with semale resentment. Allen accepted the legacy, which he gave to the Hospital at Bath; observing that Pope was always a bad accomptant, and that it to 150% he had put a cypher more, he had come nearer to the truth.

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THE person of POPE is well known not to have been formed by the nicest model. He has, in his account of the Little Club, compared himself to a spider, and by another is described as protuberant behind and before. He is said to have been beautiful in his infancy; but he was of a constitution originally seeble and weak; and as bodies of a tender frame are easily distorted, his deformity was probably in part the effect of his application. His stature was so low, that, to bring him to a level with common tables, it was necessary to raise his feat. But his face was not displeasing, and his eyes were animated and vivid.

By natural deformity, or accidental diffortion, his vital functions were so much disordered, that his life was a long disease. His most frequent assailant was the headach, which he used to relieve by inhaling the steam of coffee, which he very frequently required.

Most of what can be told concerning his petty peculiarities was communicated by a female domestic of the Earl of Oxford, who knew him perhaps after the middle of life. He was then so weak as to stand in perpetual perpetual need of female attendance; extremely female leeves of cold, so that he wore a kind of fur doublet, under a shirt of very coarse warm linen with fine sleeves. When he rose, he was invested in boddice made of stiff canvass, being scarce able to hold himself erect till they were laced, and he then put on a stannel waistcoat. One side was contracted. His legs were so stender, that he enlarged their bulk with three pair of stockings, which were drawn on and off by the maid; for he was not able to dress or undress himself, and neither went to bed nor rose without help. His weakness made it very difficult for him to be clean.

His hair had fallen almost all away; and he used to dine sometimes with Lord Oxford, privately, in a velvet cap. His dress of ceremony was black with a

tye-wig, and a little fword.

The indulgence and accommodation which his fickness required, had taught him all the unpleasing and unfocial qualities of a valetudinary man. He expected that every thing should give way to his ease or humour, as a child, whose parents will not hear her cry, has an unresisted dominion in the nursery.

C'est que l'enfant toujours est homme, C'est que l'homme est toujours enfant.

When he wanted to fleep he nodded in company; and once flumbered at his own table while the Prince of

Wales was talking of poetry.

The reputation which his friendship gave, procured him many invitations; but he was a very troublesome inmate. He brought no fervant, and had so many wants, that a numerous attendance was scarcely able to supply them. Wherever he was, he left no room for another, because he exacted the attention, and employed the activity of the whole family. His errands were so frequent and frivolous, that the soot-

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men in time avoided and neglected him; and the Earl of Oxford discharged some of the servants for their resolute resultance of his messages. The maids, when they had neglected their business, alledged that they had been employed by Mr Pope. One of his constant demands was of cosses in the night, and to the woman that waited on him in his chamber he was very burthensome; but he was careful to recompense her want of sleep; and Lord Oxford's servant declared, that in a house where her business was to answer

his call, she would not ask for wages.

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He had another fault, eafily incident to those who, fuffering much pain, think themselves entitled to whatever pleafures they can fnatch. He was too indulgent to his appetite; he loved meat highly feafoned and of strong taste; and, at the intervals of the table, amused himself with biscuits and dry conserves. If he fat down to a variety of dishes, he would oppress his stomach with repletion and though he seemed angry when a dram was offered him, did not forbear to drink it. His friends, who knew-the avenues to his heart, pampered him with prefents of luxury, which he did not fuffer to stand neglected. death of great men is not always proportioned to the lustre of their lives. Hannibal, fays Juvenal, did not perish by a javelin or a sword; the flaughters of Cannæ were revenged by a ring. The death of Pope was imputed by some of his friends to a filver saucepan, in which it was his delight to heat potted lampreys.

That he loved too well to eat, is certain; but that his fenfuality shortened his life will not be hastily concluded, when it is remembered that a conformation so irregular lasted six and sifty years, notwithstanding such pertinacious diligence of study and meditation.

In all his intercourse with mankind, he had great delight in artifice, and endeavoured to attain all his purposes by indirect and unsuspected methods. He

hardly

bardly drank tea without a stratagem. If, at the house of his friends, he wanted any accommodation, he was not willing to ask for it in plain terms, but would mention it remotely as something convenient; though, when it was procured, he soon made it appear for whose sake it had been recommended. Thus he teized Lord Orrery till he obtained a screen. He practised his arts on such small occasions, that Lady Bolingbroke used to say, in a French phrase, that he plaid the politician about cabbages and turnips. His unjustishable impression of the Patriot King, as it can be imputed to no particular motive, must have proceeded from his general habit of secrecy and cunning; he caught an opportunity of a sly trick, and pleased himself with the thought of outwitting Bolingbroke.

In familiar or convivial conversation, it does not appear that he excelled. He may be said to have refembled Dryden, as being not one that was distinguished by vivacity in company. It is remarkable, that, so near his time, so much should be known of what he has written, and so little of what he has said: traditional memory retains no sallies of raillery, nor sentences of observation; nothing either pointed or solid, either wise or merry. One apophthegm only stands upon record. When an objection raised against his inscription for Shakspeare was defended by the authority of Patrick, he replied—"horresco referens"—that "he would allow the publisher of a Dictionary to know the meaning of a single word, but not of two words put together."

He was fretful, and eafily displeased, and allowed himself to be capriciously resentful. He would sometimes leave Lord Oxford silently no one could tell why, and was to be courted back by more letters and messages than the sootmen were willing to carry. The table was indeed insested by Lady Mary Wortley, who was the friend of Lady Oxford, and who, knowing his peevishness, could by no intreaties be restrained

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from contradicting him, till their disputes were sharpened to such asperity, that one or the other quitted the house.

He fometimes condescended to be jocular with servants or inferiors; but by no merriment, either of others or his own, was he ever seen excited to laughter.

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Of his domestic character, frugality was a part eminently remarkable. Having determined not to be dependent, he determined not to be in want, and therefore wifely and magnanimously rejected all temptations to expence unfuitable to his fortune. This. general care must be universally approved; but it fometimes appeared in petty artifices of parlimony, fuch as the practice of writing his compositions on the back of letters, as may be feen in the remaining copy of the Iliad, by which perhaps in five years five thillings were faved; or in a niggardly reception of his friends, and scantiness of entertainment; as, when he had two guests in his house, he would set at supper a fingle pint upon the table; and having himfelf taken two small glasses would retire, and fay, "Gentlemen, "I leave you to your wine." Yet he tells his friends, that "he has a heart for all, a house for all, and, what-" ever they may think, a fortune for all."

He fometimes, however, made a splendid dinner, and is said to have wanted no part of the skill or elegance which such performances require. That this magnificence should be often displayed; that obstinate prudence with which he conducted his affairs would not permit; for his revenue, certain and casual, amounted only to about eight hundred pounds a year, of which however he declares himself able to assign one hundred to charity.

Of this fortune, which as it arose from public approbation was very honourably obtained, his imagination seems to have been too full: it would be hard to find a man, so well entitled to notice by his wit,

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In his Letters, and in his Poems, his garden and his grotto, his quincunx and his vines, or fome hints of his opulence, are always to be found. The great topic of his ridicule is poverty; the crimes with which he reproaches his antagonists are their debts, their habitation in the Mint, and their want of a dinner. He seems to be of an opinion not very uncommon in the world, that to want money is to want every thing.

Next to the pleasure of contemplating his possessions, seems to be that as enumerating the men of high rank with whom he was acquainted, and whose notice he loudly proclaims not to have been obtained by any practices of meanness or servility; a boast which was never denied to be true, and to which very sew poets have ever aspired. Pope never set genius to sale; he never stattered those whom he did not love, or praised those whom he did not esteem. Savage however remarked, that he began a little to relax his dignity when he wrote a distich for his Highness's dog.

His admiration of the Great seems to have increafed in the advance of life. He passed over peers and statesmen to inscribe his *Iliad* to Congreve, with a magnanimity of which the praise had been complete, had his friend's virtue been equal to his wit. Why he was chosen for so great an honour, it is not now possible to know; there is no trace in literary history of any particular intimacy between them. The name of Congreve appears in the Letters among those of his other friends, but without any observable distinc-

tion or consequence.

To his latter works, however, he took care to annex names dignified with titles, but was not very happy in his choice; for, except Lord Bathurst, none of his noble friends were such as that a good man would wish to have his intimacy with them known to posterity; he can derive little honour from the notice of Cobham, Burlington, or Bolingbroke.

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Of his focial qualities, if an estimate be made from his Letters, an opinion too favourable cannot eafily be formed; they exhibit a perpetual and unclouded effulgence of general benevolence, and particular fonds nefs. There is nothing but liberality, gratitude, constancy, and tenderness. It has been so long said as to be commonly believed, that the true characters of men may be found in their Letters, and that he who writes to his friend lays his heart open before him. But the truth is, that fuch were simple friendships of the Golden Age, and are now the friendships only of children. Very few can boast of hearts which they dare lay open to themselves, and of which, by whatever accident exposed, they do not shun a distinct and continued view; and, certainly, what we hide from ourselves we do not shew to our friends. There is, indeed, no transaction which offers stronger temptations to fallacy and fophistication than epistolary intercourse. In the eagerness of conversation the first emotions of the mind often burst out, before they are confidered; in the tumult of business, interest and passion have their genuine effect; but a friendly Letter is a calm and deliberate performance, in the cool of leifure, in the stillness of solitude, and furely no man fits down to depreciate by defign his own character.

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Friendship has no tendency to secure veracity; for by whom can a man so much wish to be thought better than he is, as by him whose kindness he desires to gain or keep? Even in writing to the world there is less constraint; the author is not confronted with his reader, and takes his chance of approbation among the different dispositions of mankind; but a Letter is addressed to a single mind, of which the prejudices and partialities are known; and must therefore please, if not by favouring them, by sorbearing to oppose them.

To charge those favourable representations, which H 2 men men give of their own minds, with the guilt of hypocritical falsehood, would shew more severity than knowledge. The writer commonly believes himself. Almost every man's thoughts, while they are general, are right; and most hearts are pure, while temptation is away. It is easy to awaken generous sentiments in privacy; to despise death when there is no danger; to glow with benevolence when there is nothing to be given. While such ideas are formed they are felt, and self-love does not suspect the gleam of virtue to be the meteor of fancy.

If the Letters of Pope are confidered merely as compositions, they seem to be premeditated and artificial. It is one thing to write because there is something which the mind wishes to discharge, and another, to solicit the imagination because ceremony or vanity requires something to be written. Pope confesses his early Letters to be vitiated with affectation and ambition: to know whether he disentangled himself from these perverters of epistolary integrity, his book

and his life must be set in comparison.

One of his favourite topics is contempt of his own poetry. For this, if it had been real, he would deferve no commendation, and in this he was certainly not fincere; for his high value of himself was sufficiently observed, and of what could he be proud but of his poetry? He writes, he says, when he has just nothing else to do; yet Swift complains that he was never at leisure for conversation, because he had always some poetical scheme in his head. It was punctually required that his writing-box should be set upon his bed before he rose; and Lord Oxford's domestic related, that, in the dreadful winter of Forty, she was called from her bed by him four times in one night, to supply him with paper, lest he should lose a thought.

He pretends infensibility to censure and criticism, though it was observed by all who knew him that every pamphlet disturbed his quiet, and that his extreme

irritability

irritability laid him open to perpetual vexation; but he wished to despise his critics, and therefore hoped

that he did despise them.

As he happened to live in two reigns when the Court paid little attention to poetry, he nursed in his mind a foolish disesteem of Kings, and proclaims that he never sees Courts. Yet a little regard shewn him by the Prince of Wales melted his obduracy; and he had not much to say when he was asked by his Royal Highness, how he could love a Prince while he distiked

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He very frequently professes contempt of the world, and reprefents himself as looking on mankind, some. times with gay indifference, as on emmets of a hilloc, below his ferious attention; and fometimes with gloomy indignation, as on monsters more worthy of hatred than of pity. These were dispositions apparently counterfeited. How could he despife those whom he lived by pleafing, and on whose approbation his esteem of himself was superstructed? Why should he hate those to whose favour he owed his honour and his ease? Of things that terminate in human life, the world is the proper judge; to despise its sentence, if it were possible, is not just; and if it were just, is not possible. Pope was far enough from this unreafonable temper; he was sufficiently a fool to Fame, and his fault was that he pretended to neglect it. His levity and his fullenness were only in his Letters; he paffed through common life, sometimes vexed, and fometimes pleafed, with the natural emotions of common men.

His fcorn of the Great is repeated too often to be real; no man thinks much of that which he despises; and as falsehood is always in danger of inconsistency, he makes it his boast at another time that he lives among them.

It is evident that his own importance swells often in his mind. He is afraid of writing, left the clerks of the Post-office should know his secrets; he has many enemies; he considers himself as surrounded by universal jealousy; "after many deaths, and many dispersions, two or three of us," says he, "may fill be brought together, not to plot, but to divert ourselves, and the world too, if it pleases;" and they can live together, and "shew what friends wits may be, in spite of all the fools in the world." All this while it was likely that the clerks did not know his hand; he certainly had no more enemies than a public character like his inevitably excites, and with what degree of friendship the wits might live, very

few were fo much fools as ever to enquire.

Some part of this pretended discontent he learned from Swift, and expresses it, I think, most frequent. ly in his correspondence with him. Swift's resentment was unreasonable, but it was sincere; Pope's was the mere mimicry of his friend, a fictitious part which he began to play before it became him. When he was only twenty-five years old, he related, that "a glut of study and retirement had thrown him on the world," and that there was danger left " a glut of the world should throw him back upon study and " retirement." To this Swift answered with great propriety, that Pope had not yet either acted or fuffered enough in the world to have become weary of it. And, indeed, it must be some very powerful reafon that can drive back to folitude him who has once enjoyed the pleafures of fociety.

In the Letters both of Swift and Pope there appears fuch narrowness of mind, as makes them insensible of any excellence that has not some affinity with their own, and confines their esteem and approbation to so small a number, that whoever should form his opinion of the age from their representation, would suppose them to have lived amidst ignorance and barbarity, unable to find among their contemporaries either vir-

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tue or intelligence, and perfecuted by those that could not understand them.

When Pope murmurs at the world, when he professes contempt of fame, when he speaks of riches and poverty, of success and disappointment, with negligent indifference, he certainly does not express his habitual and fettled fentiments, but either willfully difguifes his own character, or, what is more likely, invests himself with temporary qualities, and fallies out in the colours of the present moment. His hopes and fears, his joys and forrows, acted strongly upon his mind; and if he differed from others, it was not by careleffness; he was irritable and refentful; his malignity to Philips, whom he had first made ridiculous, and then hated for being angry, continued too long. Of his vain defire to make Bentley contemptible, I never heard any adequate reason. He was sometimes wanton in his attacks; and, before Chandos, Lady. Wortley, and Hill, was mean in his retreat.

The virtues which feem to have had most of his affection were liberality and fidelity of friendship, in which it does not appear that he was other than he describes himself. His fortune did not suffer his charity to be splendid and conspicuous; but he affished Dodsley with a hundred pounds, that he might open a shop; and of the subscription of forty pounds a year that he raised for Savage, twenty were paid by himself. He was accused of loving money, but his love was eagerness to gain, not solicitude to keep it.

In the duties of friendship he was zealous and constant: his early maturity of mind commonly united him with men older than himself, and therefore, without attaining any considerable length of life, he saw many companions of his youth fink into the grave; but it does not appear that he lost a single friend by coldness or by injury; those who loved him once, continued their kindness. His ungrateful mention of Allen in his will, was the effect of his adherence to

one whom he had known much longer, and whom he naturally loved with greater fondness. His violation of the trust reposed in him by Bolingbroke could have no motive inconfistent with the warmest affection; he either thought the action fo near to indifferent that he forgot it, or fo laudable that he expected his friend to approve it.

It was reported, with fuch confidence as almost to enforce belief, that in the papers intrusted to his executors was found a defamatory Life of Swift, which he had prepared as an instrument of vengeance to be used, if any provocation should be ever given. About this I enquired of the Earl of Marchmont, who affured me that no fuch piece was among his remains.

The religion in which he lived and died was that of the Church of Rome, to which in his correspondence with Racine he professes himself a fincere adherent. That he was not scrupulously pious in some part of his life, is known by many idle and indecent applications of fentences taken from the Scriptures; a mode of merriment which a good man dreads for its profaneness, and a witty man disdains for its easiness and vulgarity. But to whatever levities he has been betrayed, it does not appear that his principles were ever corrupted, or that he ever loft his belief of Revelation. The positions which he transmitted from Bolingbroke he feems not to have understood, and was pleafed with an interpretation that made them

A man of fuch exalted superiority, and so little moderation, would naturally have all his delinquences observed and aggravated: those who could not deny that he was excellent, would rejoice to find that he was not perfect.

Perhaps it may be imputed to the unwillingness with which the fame man is allowed to possess many advantages, that his learning has been depreciated. He certainly was in his early life a man of great literary

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curiofity; and when he wrote his Effay on Criticism had, for his age, a very wide acquaintance with books. When he entered into the living world, it feems to have happened to him as to many others, that he was less attentive to dead masters; he studied in the academy of Paracelfus, and made the universe his favourite volume. He gathered his notions fresh from reality, not from the copies of authors, but the originals of Nature. Yet there is no reafon to believe that literature ever lost his esteem; he always profesfed to love reading; and Dobson, who spent some time at his house translating his Esay on Man, when I asked him what learning he found him to possess, anfwered, More than I expected. His frequent references to history, his allusions to various kinds of knowledge, and his images felected from art and nature, with his observations on the operations of the mind and the modes of life, shew an intelligence perpetually on the wing, excursive, vigorous, and diligent, eager to purfue knowledge, and attentive to retain it.

From this curiofity arose the desire of travelling, to which he alludes in his verses to Jervas, and which, though he never found an opportunity to gratify it,

did not leave him till his life declined.

Of his intellectual character, the conftituent and fundamental principle was Good Sense, a prompt and intuitive perception of consonance and propriety. He saw immediately, of his own conceptions, what was to be chosen, and what to be rejected; and, in the works of others, what was to be shunned, and

what was to be copied.

But good fense alone is a sedate and quiescent quality, which manages its possessions well, but does not increase them; it collects few materials for its own operations, and preserves safety, but never gains supremacy. Pope had likewise genius; a mind active, ambitious, and adventurous, always investigating, always aspiring; in its widest searches still longing to go forward,

forward, in its highest slights still wishing to be higher; always imagining something greater than it knows,

always endeavouring more than it can do.

To affift these powers, he is said to have had great strength and exactness of memory. That which he had heard or read was not easily lost; and he had before him not only what his own meditation suggested, but what he had found in other writers, that might be accommodated to his present purpose.

These benefits of nature he improved by incessant and unwearied diligence; he had recourse to every source of intelligence, and lost no opportunity of information; he consulted the living as well as the dead; he read his compositions to his friends, and was never content with mediocrity when excellence could be attained. He considered poetry as the business of his life, and however he might seem to lament his occupation, he followed it with constancy; to make verses was his first labour, and to mend them was his last.

If conversation offered any thing that could be improved, he committed it to paper; if a thought, or perhaps an expression more happy than was common, rose to his mind, he was careful to write it; an independent distich was preserved for an opportunity of insertion, and some little fragments have been sound containing lines, or parts of lines, to be wrought upon at some other time.

He was one of those sew whose labour is their pleafure: he was never elevated to negligence, nor wearied to impatience; he never passed a fault unamended by indifference, nor quitted it by despair. He laboured his works first to gain reputation, and afterwards to keep it.

Of composition there are different methods. Some employ at once memory and invention, and, with little intermediate use of the pen, form and polish large

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masses by continued meditation, and write their productions only when, in their own opinion, they have completed them. It is related of Virgil, that his custom was to pour out a great number of verses in the morning, and pass the day in retrenching exuberances and correcting inaccuracies. The method of Popes, as may be collected from his translation, was to write his first thoughts in his first words, and gradually to

amplify, decorate, rectify, and refine them.

With fuch faculties, and fuch dispositions, he excelled every other writer in poetical prudence; he wrote in such a manner as might expose him to sew hazards. He used almost always the same fabric of verse; and indeed, by those sew essays which he made of any other, he did not enlarge his reputation. Of this uniformity the certain consequence was readiness and dexterity. By perpetual practice, language had in his mind a systematical arrangement; having always the same use for words, he had words so selected and combined as to be ready at his call. This increase of facility he consessed himself to have perceived in the

progrefs of his translation.

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But what was yet of more importance, his effusions were always voluntary, and his fubjects chosen by himfelf. His independence fecured him from drudging at a task, and labouring upon a barren topic: he never exchanged praise for money, nor opened a shop of condolence or congratulation. His poems, therefore, were scarce ever temporary. He suffered coronations and royal marriages to pass without a song, and derived no opportunities from recent events, nor any popularity from the accidental disposition of his readers. He was never reduced to the necessity of foliciting the fun to shine upon a birth-day, of calling the Graces and Virtues to a wedding, or of faying what multitudes have faid before him. When he could produce nothing new, he was at liberty to be filent.

His publications were for the same reason never hasty. He is said to have sent nothing to the press till it had lain two years under his inspection: it is at least certain, that he ventured nothing without nice examination. He suffered the tumult of imagination to subside, and the novelties of invention to grow familiar. He knew that the mind is always enamoured of its own productions, and did not trust his first fondness. He consulted his friends, and listened with great willingness to criticism; and, what was of more importance, he consulted himself, and let nothing pass against his own judgment.

He professed to have learned his poetry from Dryden, whom, whenever an opportunity was presented, he praised through his whole life with unvaried liberality; and perhaps his character may receive some illustration, if he be compared with his master.

Integrity of understanding and nicety of difcernment were not allotted in a less proportion to Dryden than to Pope. The rectitude of Dryden's mind was fufficiently shewn by the dismission of his poetical prejudices, and the rejection of unnatural thoughts and rugged numbers. But Dryden never defired to apply all the judgment that he had. He wrote, and professed to write, merely for the people; and when he pleased others, he contented himself. He spent no time in struggles to rouse latent powers; he never attempted to make that better which was already good, nor often to mend what he must have known to be faulty. He wrote, as he tells us, with very little confideration; when occasion or necessity called upon him, he poured out what the prefent moment hap. pened to supply, and, when once it had passed the press, ejected it from his mind; for when he had no pecuniary interest, he had no further solicitude.

Pope was not content to fatisfy; he defired to excel, and therefore always endeavoured to do his best: he did not court the candour, but dared the judgment h

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of his reader, and, expecting no indulgence from cthers, he shewed none to himself. He examined lines and words with minute and punctilious observation, and retouched every part with indefatigable diligence,

till he had left nothing to be forgiven.

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nt of For this reason he kept his pieces very long in his hands, while he considered and reconsidered them. The only poems which can be supposed to have been written with such regard to the times as might hasten their publication, were the two satires of Thirty-eight, of which Dodsley told me, that they were brought to him by the author; that they might be fairly copied. "Almost every line," he said, "was then written twice over; I gave him a clean transcript, which he fent some time afterwards to me for the press, with almost every line written twice over a second time."

His declaration, that his care for his works ceased at their publication, was not strictly true. His parental attention never abandoned them; what he found amiss in the first edition, he silently corrected in those that followed. He appears to have revised the Iliad, and freed it from some of its imperfections; and the Essay on Criticism received many improvements after its first appearance. It will seldom be found that he altered without adding clearness, elegance, or vigour.

Pope had perhaps the judgment of Dryden; but Dryden certainly wanted the diligence of Pope.

In acquired knowledge, the superiority must be allowed to Dryden, whose education was more scholastic, and who before he became an author had been allowed more time for study, with better means of information. His mind has a larger range, and he collects his images and illustrations from a more extensive circumference of science. Dryden knew more of man in his general nature, and Pope in his local manners. The notions of Dryden were formed by comprehensive speculation, and those of Pope by minute attention.

Vol. IV.

There is more dignity in the knowledge of Dryden,

and more certainty in that of Pope.

Poetry was not the sole praise of either; for both excelled likewise in prose; but Pope did not borrow his prose from his predecessor. The style of Dryden is capricious and varied, that of Pope is cautious and uniform; Dryden obeys the motions of his own mind, Pope constrains his mind to his own rules of composition. Dryden is sometimes vehement and rapid; Pope is always smooth, uniform, and gentle. Dryden's page is a natural field, rising into inequalities, and diversified by the varied exuberance of abundant vegetation; Pope's is a velvet lawn, shaven by the

feythe, and levelled by the roller.

Of genius, that power which constitutes a poet: that quality without which judgment is cold and knowledge is inert; that energy which collects, combines, amplifies, and animates; the fuperiority must, with fome hefitation, be allowed to Dryden. It is not to be inferred that of this poetical vigour Pope had only a little, because Dryden had more; for every other writer fince Milton must give place to Pope; and even of Dryden it must be said, that if he has brighter paragraphs, he has not better poems. Dryden's performances were always hafty, either excited by fome external occasion, or extorted by domestic neceffity; he composed without consideration, and published without correction. What his mind could supply at call, or gather in one excursion, was all that he fought, and all that he gave. The dilatory caution of Pope enabled him to condense his sentiments, to multiply his images, and to accumulate all that study might produce, or chance might supply. If the flights of Dryden therefore are higher, Pope continues longer on the wing. If of Dryden's fire the blaze is brighter, of Pope's the heat is more regular and constant. Dryden often furpaffes expectation, and Pope never

never falls below it. Dryden is read with frequent aftonishment, and Pope with perpetual delight.

This parallel will, I hope, when it is well confidered, be found just; and if the reader should suspect me, as I suspect myself, of some partial fondness for the memory of Dryden, let him not too hastily condemn me; for meditation and enquiry may, perhaps, shew him the reasonableness of thy determination.

is always finooth, uniform, and gentle. Drys. len's page is a natural field, a fing into inequalities, and diverlified by the varied exportance of abundant contion; Pope's is a velocit lawn, finaren by the

THE Works of POPE are now to be distinctly examined, not so much with attention to slight faults or petry beauties, as to the general character and effect of each performance.

It feems natural for a young poet to initiate himfelf by Pastorals, which, not professing to imitate real life, require no experience, and exhibiting only the fimple operation of unmingled passions, admit no subtle reafoning or deep enquiry. Pope's Pastorals are not however composed but with close thought; they have reference to the times of the day, the feafons of the year, and the periods of human life. The last, that which turns the attention upon age and death, was the author's favourite. To tell of disappointment and mifery, to thicken the darkness of futurity, and perplex the labyrinth of uncertainty, has been always a delicious employment of the poets. His preference was probably just. I wish, however, that his fondness had not overlooked a line in which the Zephyrs are made to lament in filence.

To charge these Pastorals with want of invention, is to require what never was intended. The imitations are so ambitiously frequent, that the writer evidently means rather to shew his literature than his wit. It is surely sufficient for an author of sixteen,

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not only to be able to copy the poems of antiquity with judicious felection, but to have obtained fufficient power of language, and skill in metre, to exhibit a series of versification, which had in English poetry no

precedent, nor has fince had an imittion.

The defign of Windfor Forest is evidently derived from Cooper's Hill, with some attention to Waller's poem on The Park; but Pope cannot be denied to excel his mafters in variety and elegance, and the art of interchanging description, narrative, and morality. The objection made by Dennis is the want of plan, of a regular fubordination of parts terminating in the principal and original defign. There is this want in most descriptive poems, because as the scenes, which they must exhibit successively, are all subsisting at the same time, the order in which they are shewn must by necessity be arbitrary, and more is not to be expect. ed from the last part than from the first. The attention, therefore, which cannot be detained by suspense, must be excited by diversity, such as his poem offers to its reader.

But the defire of diversity may be too much indulged; the parts of Windsor Forest which deserve least praise, are those which were added to enliven the stillness of the scene, the appearance of Father Thames, and the transformation of Lodona. Addison had in his Campaign derided the Rivers that rise from their occybeds to tell stories of heroes, and it is therefore strange that Pope should adopt a siction not only unnatural but lately censured. The story of Lodona is told with sweetness; but a new metamorphosis is a ready and puerile expedient; nothing is easier than to tell how a flower was once a blooming virgin, or a rock an obdurate tyrant.

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The Temple of Fame has, as Steele warmly declared, a thousand beauties. Every part is splendid; there is great luxuriance of ornaments; the original vision of Chaucer was never denied to be much improved; the

allegory is very skilfully continued, the imagery is properly selected, and learnedly displayed: yet, with all this comprehension of excellence, as its scene is laid in remote ages, and its sentiments, if the concluding paragraph be excepted, have little relation to general manners or common life, it never obtained much notice, but is turned filently over, and seldom quoted or mentioned with either praise or blame.

That the Meffiah excels the Pollio is no great praise, if it be considered from what original the improve-

ments are derived.

The Verses on the unfortunate Lady have drawn much attention by the illaudable fingularity of treating fuicide with respect; and they must be allowed to be written in fome parts with vigorous animation, and in others with gentle tenderness; nor has Pope produced any poem in which the fense predominates more over the diction. But the tale is not skilfully told; it is not easy to discover the character of either the Lady or her Guardian. History relates that she was about to disparage herself by a marriage with an inferior; Pope praises her for the dignity of ambition. and yet condemns the uncle to detestation for his pride; the ambitious love of a niece may be opposed by the interest, malice, or envy of an uncle, but newer by his pride. On fuch an occasion a poet may be allowed to be obscure, but inconsistency never can be tell theries of heroes, and it is therefore fieldgir

The Ode for St Cecilia's Day was undertaken at the defire of Steele: in this the author is generally confessed to have miscarried, yet he has miscarried only as compared with Dryden; for he has far outgone other competitors. Dryden's plan is better chosen; history will always take stronger hold of the attention than fable: the passions excited by Dryden are the pleasures and pains of real life, the scene of Pope is laid in imaginary existence; Pope is read with calm acquiescence, Dryden with turbulent delight; Pope

hangs upon the ear, and Dryden finds the passes of the mind.

Both the odes want the effential constituent of metrical compositions, the stated recurrence of settled numbers. It may be alledged, that Pindar is said by Horace to have written numeris lege folutis: but as no such lax performances have been transmitted to us, the meaning of that expression cannot be fixed; and perhaps the like return might properly be made to a modern Pindarist, as Mr Cobb received from Bentley, who, when he found his criticism's upon a Greek Exercise, which Cobb had presented, resuted one after another by Pindar's authority, cried out at last, Pindar was a bold fellow, but thou art an impudent one.

If Pope's ode be particularly inspected, it will be found that the first stanza consists of founds well cho-

fen indeed, but only founds.

The fecond confifts of hyperbolical common-places, eafily to be found, and perhaps without much diffi-

culty to be as well expressed.

In the third, however, there are numbers, images, harmony, and vigour, not unworthy the antagonist of Dryden. Had all been like this—but every part cannot be the best.

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The next stanzas place and detain us in the dark and dismal regions of mythology, where neither hope nor fear, neither joy nor sorrow can be found: the poet however faithfully attends us; we have all that can be performed by elegance of diction, or sweetness of versification; but what can form avail without better matter?

The last stanza recurs again to common-places. The conclusion is too evidently modelled by that of Dryden; and it may be remarked that both end with the same fault, the comparison of each is literal on one side, and metaphorical on the other.

Poets do not always express their own thoughts;

Pope, with all this labour in the praise of Music, was ignorant of its principles, and infensible of its effects.

One of his greatest though of his earliest works is the Essay on Criticism, which, if he had written nothing else, would have placed him among the first critics and the first poets, as it exhibits every mode of excellence that can embellish or dignify didactic composition, selection of matter, novelty of arrangement, justness of precept, splendour of illustration, and propriety of digression. I know not whether it be pleasing to consider that he produced this piece at twenty, and never afterwards excelled it: he that delights himself with observing that such powers may be so soon attained, cannot but grieve to think that life was ever after at a stand.

To mention the particular beauties of the Effav would be unprofitably tedious; but I cannot forbear. to observe, that the comparison of a student's progress in the sciences with the journey of a traveller in the Alps, is perhaps the best that English poetry can shew. A simile, to be perfect, must both illustrate and ennoble the subject; must shew it to the understanding in a clearer view, and display it to the fancy with greater dignity; but either of thefe qualities may be fufficient to recommend it. In didactic poetry, of which the great purpose is instruction, a simile may be praifed which illustrates, though it does not ennoble; in heroics, that may be admitted which ennobles. though it does not illustrate. That it may be complete, it is required to exhibit, independently of its references, a pleasing image; for a simile is said to be a short episode. To this antiquity was so attentive, that circumstances were sometimes added, which having no parallels, ferved only to fill the imagination, and produced what Perrault ludicroufly called comparisons with a long tail. In their fimilies the greatest writers have fometimes failed; the ship-race, compa-

red with the chariot-race, is neither illustrated nor ag-

grandised;

grandised; sand and water make all the difference; when Apollo, running after Daphne, is likened to a greyhound chasing a hare, there is nothing gained; the ideas of pursuit and slight are too plain to be made plainer, and a god and the daughter of a god are not represented much to their advantage, by a hare and dog. The simile of the Alps has no useless parts, yet affords a striking picture by itself; it makes the foregoing position better understood, and enables it to take faster hold on the attention; it assists the apprehension, and elevates the fancy.

Let me likewise dwell a little on the celebrated paragraph, in which it is directed that the sound should seem an echo to the sense; a precept which Pope is allowed to have observed beyond any other English

poet.

This notion of representative metre, and the defire of discovering frequent adaptations of the found to the fense, have produced, in my opinion, many wild conceits and imaginary beauties. All that can furnish this representation are the founds of the words considered fingly, and the time in which they are pronounced. Every language has fome words framed to exhibit the noises which they express, as thump, rattle, These however are but few, and the poet growl, bis. cannot make them more, nor can they be of any use but when found is to be mentioned. The time of pronunciation was in the dactylic measures of the learned languages capable of confiderable variety; but that variety could be accommodated only to motion or duration, and different degrees of motion were perhaps expressed by verses rapid or slow, without much attention of the writer, when the image had full posfession of his fancy; but our language having little flexibility, our verses can differ very little in their cadence. The fancied refemblances, I fear, arife fometimes merely from the ambiguity of words; there is fup-

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posed to be some relation between a soft line and a soft couch, or between hard syllables and hard fortune.

Motion, however, may be in some fort exemplified; and yet it may be suspected that even in such resemblances the mind often governs the ear, and the sounds are estimated by their meaning. One of the most successful attempts has been to describe the labour of Sisyphus:

With many a weary step, and many a groan, Up a high hill he heaves a huge round stone; The huge round stone, resulting with a bound, Thunders impetuous down, and smoaks along the ground.

Who does not perceive the stone to move slowly upward, and roll violently back? But set the same numbers to another sense;

While many a merry tale, and many a fong, Chear'd the rough road, we wish'd the rough road along.

The rough road then, returning in a round, Mock'd our impatient steps, for all was fairy ground.

We have now furely loft much of the delay, and much of the rapidity.

But to fhew how little the greatest master of numbers can fix the principles of representative harmony, it will be sufficient to remark that the poet, who tells us, that

When Ajax strives—the words move flow.

Not so when swift Camilla scours the plain,

Flies o'er th' unbending corn, and skims along the
main;

when he had enjoyed for about thirty years the praise of Camilla's lightness of foot, tried another experiment upon found and time, and produced this memorable triplet;

Waller was smooth; but Dryden taught to join The varying verse, the full resounding line, The long majestic march, and energy divine.

Here are the swiftness of the rapid race, and the march of slow-paced majesty, exhibited by the same poet in the same sequence of syllables, except that the exact prosodist will find the line of swiftness by one time longer than that of tardiness.

Beauties of this kind are commonly fancied; and when real, are technical and nugatory, not to be re-

To the praises which have been accumulated on The Rape of the Lock by readers of every class, from the critic to the waiting-maid, it is difficult to make any addition. Of that which is universally allowed to be the most attractive of all ludicrous compositions, let it rather be now enquired from what sources the

power of pleasing is derived.

Dr Warburton, who excelled in critical perspicacity, has remarked, that the preternatural agents are very happily adapted to the purposes of the poem. The heathen deities can no longer gain attention: we should have turned away from a contest between Venus and Diana. The employment of allegorical persons always excites conviction of its own absurdity; they may produce effects, but cannot conduct actions; when the phantom is put in motion, it dissolves; thus Discord may raise a mutiny, but Liscord cannot conduct a march, nor besiege a town. Pope brought into view a new race of Beings, with powers and passions proportionate to their operation. The sylphs and gnomes act at the toilet and the tea-table, what more

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more terrific and more powerful phantoms perform on the stormy ocean, or the field of battle, they give their proper help, and do their proper mischief.

Pope is faid, by an objector, not to have been the inventor of this petty nation; a charge which might with more justice have been brought against the author of the *Biad*, who doubtless adopted the religious system of his country; for what is there but the names of his agents which Pope has not invented? Has he not assigned them characters and operations never heard of before? Has he not, at least, given them their first poetical existence? If this is not sufficient to denominate his works original, nothing original ever can be written.

In this work are exhibited, in a very high degree, the two most engaging powers of an author. New things are made familiar, and familiar things are made new. A race of aerial people, never heard of before, is presented to us in a manner so clear and easy, that the reader seeks for no further information, but immediately mingles with his new acquaintance, adopts their interests, and attends their pursuits, loves a sylph, and detests a gnome.

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That familiar things are made new, every paragraph will prove. The subject of the poem is an event below the common incidents of common life; nothing real is introduced that is not seen so often as to be no longer regarded, yet the whole detail of a semale-day is here brought before us invested with so much art of decoration, that, though nothing is disguissed, every thing is striking, and we feel all the appetite of curiosity for that from which we have a thousand times turned sastidiously away.

The purpose of the Poet is, as he tells us, to laught at the little unguarded follies of the semale sex. It is therefore without justice that Dennis charges the Rape of the Lock with the want of a moral, and for that reason sets it below the Lutrin, which exposes the pride

Pope nor Boileau has made the world much better than he found it; but if they had both fucceeded, it were easy to tell who would have deserved most from public gratitude. The freaks, and humours, and spleen, and vanity of women, as they embroil families in discord, and fill houses with disquiet, do more to obstruct the happiness of life in a year than the ambition of the clergy in many centuries. It has been well observed, that the misery of man proceeds not from any single crush of overwhelming evil, but from

finall vexations continually repeated.

It is remarked by Dennis likewise, that the machinery is superfluous: that, by all the bustle of preternatural operation, the main event is neither hastened not retarded. To this charge an efficacious answer is not easily made. The sylphs cannot be said to help or to oppose, and it must be allowed to imply some want of art, that their power has not been sufficiently intermingled with the action. Other parts may likewise be charged with want of connection; the game at ombre might be spared, but if the Lady had lost her hair while she was intent upon her cards, it might have been inferred that those who are too fond of play will be in danger of neglecting more important interests. Those perhaps are faults; but what are such faults to so much excellence!

The Epistle of Eloise to Abelard is one of the most happy productions of human wit: the subject is so judiciously chosen, that it would be difficult, in turning over the annals of the world, to find another which so many circumstances concur to recommend. We regularly interest ourselves most in the fortune of those who most deserve our notice. Abelard and Eloise were conspicuous in their days for eminence of merit. The heart naturally loves truth. The adventures and missortunes of this illustrious pair are known from undisputed history. Their fate does not leave

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the mind in hopeless dejection; for they both found quiet and consolation in retirement and piety. So new and so affecting is their story, that it superfedes invention, and imagination ranges at full liberty with-

out straggling into scenes of fable.

The story, thus skilfully adopted, has been diligently improved. Pope has left nothing behind him, which seems more the effect of studious perseverance and laborious revisal. Here is particularly observable the curiosa felicitas, a fruitful soil, and careful cultivation. Here is no cradeness of sense, nor asperity of language.

The fources from which fentiments, which have fo much vigour and efficacy, have been drawn, are shewn to be the mystic writers by the learned author of the Essay on the Life and Writings of Pope; a book which teaches how the brow of Criticism may be smoothed, and how she may be enabled, with all her severity, to

attract and to delight.

The train of my disquisition has now conducted me to that poetical wonder, the translation of the *Iliad*; a performance which no age or nation can pretend to equal. To the Greeks, translation was almost unknown; it was totally unknown to the inhabitants of Greece. They had no recourse to the Barbarians for poetical beauties, but sought for every thing in Homer, where, indeed, there is but little which they might not find.

The Italians have been very diligent translators; but I can hear of no version, unless perhaps Anguillara's Ovid may be excepted, which is read with eagerness. The Isiad of Salvini every reader may discover to be punctiliously exact; but it seems to be the work of a linguist skilfully pedantic, and his countrymen, the proper judges of its power to please, reject

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Their predecessors the Romans have left some specimens of translation behind them, and that employ-Vol. IV. ment must have had some credit in which Tully and Germanicus engaged; but unless we suppose, what is perhaps true, that the plays of Terence were versions of Menander, nothing translated seems ever to have risen to high reputation. The French, in the meridian hour of their learning, were very laudably industrious to enrich their own language with the wisdom of the ancients; but sound themselves reduced, by whatever necessity, to turn the Green and Roman poetry into prose. Whoever could read an author, could translate him. From such rivals little can be feared.

The chief help of Pope in this ardnous undertaking was drawn from the versions of Dryden. Virgil had borrowed much of his imagery from Homer, and part of the debt was now paid by his translator. Pope fearched the pages of Dryden for happy combinations of heroic diction; but it will not be denied that he added much to what he found. He cultivated our language with fo much diligence and art, that he has left in his Homer a treasure of poetical elegances to posterity. His version may be said to have tuned the English tongue; for fince it's appearance no writer, however deficient in other powers, has wanted melody. Such a series of lines so elaborately corrected, and so fweetly modulated, took possession of the public ear; the vulgar was enamoured of the poem, and the learned wondered at the translation.

But in the most general applause discordant voices will always be heard. It has been objected by some, who wish to be numbered among the sons of learning, that Pope's version of Homer is not Homerical; that it exhibits no resemblance of the original and characteristic manner of the Father of Poetry, as it wants his awful simplicity, his artless grandeur, his unaffected majesty. This cannot be totally denied; but it must be remembered that necessitas quod cogit defendit; that may be lawfully done which cannot be forbor not the sound to the sound that may be lawfully done which cannot be forbor not the sound to the sound that may be lawfully done which cannot be forbor not the sound to the sound that may be lawfully done which cannot be forbor not the sound to the sound that may be lawfully done which cannot be forbor not the sound to the sound that may be lawfully done which cannot be forbor not the sound to the sound that the sound that

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Time and place will always enforce regard. In estimating this translation, consideration must be had of the nature of our language, the form of our metre, and, above all, of the change which two thousand years have made in the modes of life and the habits of thought. Virgil wrote in a language of the same general fabric with that of Homer, in verses of the same measure, and in an age nearer to Homer's time by eighteen hundred years; yet he found, even then, the state of the world so much altered, and the demand for elegance so much increased, that mere nature would be endured no longer; and perhaps, in the multitude of borrowed passages, very sew can be shewn which he has not embellished:

There is a time when nations emerging from barbarity, and falling into regular subordination, gain leifure to grow wise, and feel the shame of ignorance and the craving pain of unsatisfied curiosity. To this hunger of the mind plain sense is grateful; that which fills the void removes uneasiness, and to be free from pain for a while is pleasure; but repletion generates fastidiousness; a saturated intellect soon becomes luxurious, and knowledge finds no willing reception till it is recommended by artificial diction. Thus it will be found, in the progress of learning, that in all nations the first writers are simple, and that every age improves in elegance. One refinement always makes way for another, and what was expedient to Virgil was necessary to Pope.

I suppose many readers of the English Iliad, when they have been touched with some unexpected beauty of the lighter kind, have tried to enjoy it in the original, where, alas! it was not to be found. Homer doubtless owes to his translator many Ovidian graces not exactly suitable to his character; but to have added can be no great crime, if nothing be taken away. Elegance is surely to be desired, if it be not gained at

the expence of dignity. A hero would wish to be

loved, as well as to be reverenced.

To a thousand cavils one answer is sufficient; the purpose of a writer is to be read, and the criticism which would destroy the power of pleasing must be blown aside. Pope wrote for his own age and his own nation: he knew that it was necessary to colour the images and point the sentiments of his author; he therefore made him graceful, but lost him some of his sublimity.

The copious notes with which the version is accompanied, and by which it is recommended to many readers, though they were undoubtedly written to swell the volumes, ought not to pass without praise: commentaries which attract the reader by the pleasure of perusal have not often appeared; the notes of others are read to clear difficulties, those of Pope to vary

entertainment.

It has however been objected, with sufficient reafon, that there is in the commentary too much of unseasonable levity and affected gaiety; that too many appeals are made to the Ladies, and the ease which is so carefully preserved is sometimes the ease of a trifler. Every art has its terms, and every kind of instruction its proper style; the gravity of common critics may be tedious, but is less despicable than childish merriment.

Of the Odyssey nothing remains to be observed: the same general praise may be given to both translations, and a particular examination of either would require a large volume. The notes were written by Broome, who endeavoured not unsuccessfully to imitate his

master.

Of the Dunciad the hint is confessedly taken from Dryden's Mrc Flecknoe; but the plan is so enlarged and diversified as justly to claim the praise of an original, and affords perhaps the best specimen that has yet appeared of personal satire ludicrously pompous.

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That the design was moral, whatever the author might tell either his readers or himself, I am not convinced. The first motive was the desire of revenging the contempt with which Theobald had treated his Shakspeare, and regaining the honour which he had lost, by crushing his opponent. Theobald was not of bulk enough to fill a poem, and therefore it was necessary to find other enemies with other names,

at whose expence he might divert the public.

In this defign there was petulance and malignity enough; but I cannot think it very criminal. An author places himself uncalled before the tribunal of Criticism, and solicits fame at the hazard of disgrace. Dulness or desormity are not culpable in themselves, but may be very justly reproached when they pretend to the honour of wit or the influence of beauty. If bad writers were to pass without reprehension, what should restrain them? impune diem consumpserit ingens Telephus; and upon bad writers only will censure have much effect. The satire which brought Theobald and Moore into contempt, dropped impotent from Bentley, like the javelin of Priam.

All truth is valuable, and fatirical criticism may be considered as useful when it rectifies error and improves judgment; he that refines the public taste is

a public benefactor.

The beauties of this poem are well known; its chief fault is the groffness of its images. Pope and Swift had an unnatural delight in ideas physically impure, such as every other tongue utters with unwillingness, and of which every ear shrinks from the mention.

But even this fault, offensive as it is, may be forgiven for the excellence of other passages; such as the formation and dissolution of Moore, the account of the Traveller, the missortune of the Florist, and the crowded thoughts and stately numbers which dignify the concluding paragraph.

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The alterations which have been made in the Dunciad, not always for the better, require that it should be published, as in the last collection, with all its variations.

The Essay on Man was a work of great labour and long confideration, but certainly not the happiest of Pope's performances. The fubject is perhaps not very proper for poetry, and the poet was not fufficiently mafter of his fubject; metaphyfical morality was to him a new study, he was proud of his acquisitions, and, supposing himself master of great secrets, was in hafte to teach what he had not learned. Thus he tells us, in the first Epistle, that from the nature of the Supreme Being may be deduced an order of beings fuch as mankind, because Infinite Excellence can do only what is best. He finds out that these beings must be somewhere, and that all the question is whether man be in a wrong place. Surely if, according to the poet's Leibnitian reasoning, we may infer that man ought to be, only because he is, we may allow that his place is the right place, because he has it. Supreme Wisdom is not less infallible in disposing than in creating. But what is meant by somewhere and place, and wrong place, it had been vain to ask Pope, who probably had never asked himself.

Having exalted himself into the chair of wisdom, he tells us much that every man knows, and much that he does not know himself; that we see but little, and that the order of the universe is beyond our comprehension; an opinion not very uncommon; and that there is a chain of subordinate beings from infinite to nothing, of which himself and his readers are equally ignorant. But he gives us one comfort, which, without his help, he supposes unattainable, in the po-

fition that though we are fools, yet God is wife.

This Essay affords an egregious instance of the predominance of genius, the dazzling splendour of imagery, and the seductive powers of eloquence. Never

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were penury of knowledge and vulgarity of fentiment fo happily difguifed. The reader feels his mind full. though he learns nothing; and when he meets it in its new array, no longer knows the talk of his mother and his nurse. When these wonder-working founds fink into fense, and the doctrine of the Essay, difrobed of its ornaments, is left to the powers of its naked excellence, what shall we discover? That we are. in comparison with our Creator, very weak and ignorant; that we do not uphold the chain of existence, and that we could not make one another with more skill than we are made. We may learn yet more; that the arts of human life were copied from the instinctive operations of other animals; that if the world be made for man, it may be faid that man was made for geefe. To these profound principles of natural knowledge are added fome moral instructions. equally new; that felf-interest, well understood, will produce focial concord; that men are mutual gainers. by mutual benefits; that evil is fometimes balanced by good; that human advantages are unstable and fallacious, of uncertain duration, and doubtful effect: that our true honour is, not to have a great part, but to act it well: that virtue only is our own; and that happiness is always in our power.

Surely a man of no very comprehensive search may venture to say that he has heard all this before; but it was never till now recommended by such a blaze of embellishment, or such sweetness of melody. The vigorous contraction of some inoughts, the luxuriant amplification of others, the incidental illustrations, and sometimes the dignity, sometimes the softness of the verses, enchain philosophy, suspend criticism, and

oppress judgment by overpowering pleasure.

This is true of many paragraphs; yet if I had undertaken to exemplify Pope's felicity of composition before a rigid critic, I should not select the Essay on Man; for it contains more lines unsuccessfully laboured,

boured, more harshness of diction, more thoughts imperfectly expressed, more levity without elegance, and more heaviness without strength, than will easily be found in all his other works.

The Characters of Men and Women are the product of diligent speculation upon human life; much labour has been bestowed upon them, and Pope very seldom laboured in vain. That his excellence may be properly estimated, I recommend a comparison of his Characters of Women with Boileau's Satire; it will then be feen with how much more perspicacity female nature is investigated, and female excellence felected; and he furely is no mean writer to whom Boileau shall be found inferior. The Characters of Men, however, are written with more, if not with deeper, thought, and exhibit many paffages exquisitely beautiful. Gem and the Flower will not eafily be equalled. In the women's part are some defects; the character of Attoffar is not so neatly finished as that of Clodio; and some of the female characters may be found perhaps more frequently among men; what is faid of Philomede was true of Prior.

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In the Epiftles to Lord Bathurst and Lord Burling. ton, Dr Warburton has endeavoured to find a train of thought which was never in the writer's head, and to support his hypothesis, has printed that first which was published last. In one, the most valuable passage is perhaps the Elegy on Good Sense, and the other the

End of the Duke of Buckingham.

The Epistle to Arbuthnot, now arbitrarily called the Prologue to the Satires, is a performance confifting, as it feems, of many fragments wrought into one defign, which by this union of scattered beauties contains more striking paragraphs than could probably have been brought together into an occasional work. As there is no stronger motive to exertion than felfdefence, no part has more elegance, spirit, or dignity,

than the poet's vindication of his own character. The

meanest passage is the latire upon Sporus.

Of the two poems which derived their names from the year, and which are called the Epilogue to the Satires, it was very justly remarked by Savage, that the fecond was in the whole more strongly conceived, and more equally supported; but that it had no single passages equal to the contention in the first for the dignity of Vice, and the celebration of the triumph of

Corruption.

The Imitations of Horace feem to have been written as relaxations of his genius. This employment became his favourite by its facility; the plan was ready to his hand, and nothing was required but to accommodate as he could the fentiments of an old author to recent facts or familiar images; but what is easy is feldom excellent; fuch imitations cannot give pleafure to common readers; the man of learning may be fometimes furprifed and delighted by an unexpected parallel; but the comparison requires knowledge of the original, which will likewise often detect firained applications. Between Roman images and English manners there will be an irreconcileable diffimilitude, and the work will be generally uncouth and party-coloured; neither original nor translated, neither ancient nor modern.

Pope had, in proportions very nicely adjusted to each other, all the qualities that constitute genius. He had Invention, by which new trains of events are formed, and new scenes of imagery displayed, as in the Rape of the Lock; and by which extrinsic and adventitious embellishments and illustrations are connected with a known subject, as in the Essay on Criticism. He had Imagination, which strongly impresses on the writer's mind, and enables him to convey to the reader, the various forms of nature, incidents of life, and energies of passion, as in his Eloisa, Windsor Forest, and the Ethic Epistes. He had Judgment which

which selects from life or nature what the present, purpose requires, and, by separating the essence of things from its concomitants, often makes the representation more powerful than the reality: and he had colours of language always before him, ready to decorate his matter with every grace of elegant expression, as when he accommodates his diction to the wonderful multiplicity of Homer's sentiments and de-

fcriptions.

Poetical expression includes sound as well as meaning; Music, says Dryden, is inarticulate Poetry; among the excellencies of Pope, therefore, must be mentioned the melody of his metre. By perusing the works of Dryden, he discovered the most persect fabric of English verse, and habituated himself to that only which he found the best; in consequence of which restraint, his poetry has been censured as too uniformly musical, and as glutting the ear with unvaried sweetness. I suspect this objection to be the cant of those who judge by principles rather than perception: and who would even themselves have less pleasure in his works, if he had tried to relieve attention by studied discords, or affected to break his lines and vary his pauses.

But though he was thus careful of his verification, he did not oppress his powers with supersuous rigour. He seems to have thought with Boileau, that the practice of writing might be refined till the difficulty should overbalance the advantage. The construction of his language is not always strictly grammatical; with those rhymes which prescription had conjoined he contented himself, without regard to Swist's remonstrances, though there was no striking consonance; nor was he very careful to vary his terminations, or to resuse admission at a small distance to the

fame rhymes.

To Swift's edict for the exclusion of Alexandrines and Triplets he paid little regard; he admitted them,

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but, in the opinion of Fenton, too rarely; he uses them more liberally in his translation than his poems.

He has a few double rhymes; and always, I think, unfuccessfully, except once in the Rape of the Lock.

Expletives he very early ejected from his verses; but he now and then admits an epithet rather commodious than important. Each of the six sirst lines of the Iliad might lose two syllables with very little diminution of the meaning; and sometimes, after all his art and labour, one verse seems to be made for the sake of another. In his latter productions the diction is sometimes vitiated by French idioms, with which Bolingbroke had perhaps infected him.

I have been told that the couplet by which he declared his own ear to be most gratified was this:

Lo, where Mœotis sleeps, and hardly flows The freezing Tanais through a waste of snows.

But the reason of this preference I cannot discover. It is remarked by Watts, that there is scarcely a happy combination of Words, or a phrase poetically elegant in the English language, which Pope has not inserted into his version of Homer. How he obtained possession of so many beauties of speech, it were desirable to know. That he gleaned from authors, obscure as well as eminent, what he thought brilliant or useful, and preserved it all in a regular collection, is not unlikely. When, in his last years, mall's Satires were shown him, he wish'd that he had seen them sooner.

New fentiments and new images others may produce; but to attempt any further improvement of verification will be dangerous. Art and diligence have now done their best, and what shall be added will be the effort of tedious toil and needless curiosity.

After all this, it is furely superfluous to answer the question that has once been asked, Whether Pope

Was a poet? otherwise than by asking in return, if Pope be not a poet, where is poetry to be found? To circumscribe poetry by definition will only shew the narrowness of the definer, though a definition which shall exclude Pope will not easily be made. Let us look round upon the present time, and back upon the past; let us enquire to whom the voice of mankind has decreed the wreath of poetry; let their productions be examined, and their claims stated, and the pretensions of Pope will be no more disputed. Had he given the world only his version, the name of poet must have been allowed him: if the writer of the Iliad were to class his successors, he would assign a very high place to his translator, without requiring any other evidence of Genius.

The following Letter, of which the original is in the hands of Lord Hardwicke, was communicated to me by the kindness of Mr Jodrell.

"To Mr BRIDGES, at the Bishop of London's, at "Fulham.

"SIR,

"THE favour of your Letter, with your Remarks, can never be enough acknowledged; and the speed, with which you discharged so troublesome a task,

doubles the obligation.

"I must own, you have pleased me very much by the commendations so ill bestowed upon me; but, I assure you, much more by the frankness of your cenfure, which I ought to take the more kindly of the two, as it is more advantageous to a scribbler to be improved in his judgment than to be soothed in his vanity. The greater part of those deviations from the Greek, which you have observed, I was led into by Chapman and Hobbes; who are (it seems) as much

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much celebrated for their knowledge of the original, as they are decryed for the badness of their translations. Chapman pretends to have restored the genuine sense of the author, from the mistakes of al. former explainers, in feveral hundred places; and the Cambridge editors of the large Homer, in Greek and Latin, attributed fo much to Hobbes, that they confess they have corrected the old Latin interpretation very often by his version. For my part, I generally took the author's meaning to be as you have explained it; yet their authority, joined to the knowledge of my own imperfectness in the language, over-ruled me. However, Sir, you may be confident I think you in the right, because you happen to be of my opinion: (for men, let them fay what they will, never approve any other's fense, but as it squares with their own.) But you have made me much more proud of, and pofitive in my judgment, fince it is strengthened by yours. I think your criticisms, which regard the expression, very just, and shall make my profit of them: To give you some proof that I am in earnest, I will alter three verses on your bare objection, though I have Mr Dryden's example for each of them. And this. I hope, you will account no small piece of obedience, from one, who values the authority of one true poet above that of twenty critics or commentators. though I speak thus of commentators, I will continue to read carefully all I can procure, to make up, that way, for my own want of critical understanding in the original beauties of Homer. Though the greatest of them are certainly those of the Invention and Defign, which are not at all confined to the language: for the diftinguishing excellencies of Homer are (by the confent of the best critics of all nations) first in the manners, (which include all the speeches, as being no other than the representations of each person's manners by his words:) and then in that rapture and fire, which carries you away with him, with that wonder-Vol. IV.

ful force, that no man who has a true poetical spirit is master of himself, while he reads him, Homer makes you interested and concerned before you are aware, all at cance; whereas Virgil does it by soft degrees. This, I believe, is what a translator of Homer ought principally to imitate; and it is very hard for any translator to come up to it, because the chief reason why all translations fall short of their originals is, that the very constraint they are obliged to, renders them

heavy and dispirited.

"The great beauty of Homer's language, as I take it, confifts in that noble simplicity, which runs through all his works; (and yet his diction, contrary to what one would imagine consistent with simplicity, is at the same time very copious.) I don't know how I have run into this pedantry in a Letter, but I find I have said too much, as well as spoken too inconsiderately; what farther thoughts I have upon this subject, I shall be glad to communicate to you (for my own improvement) when we meet; which is a happiness I very earnestly desire, as I do likewise some opportunity of proving how much I think myself obliged to your friendship, and how truly I am, Sir,

Your most faithful, Irumble fervant,

A. POPE."

The Criticism upon Pope's Epitaphs, which was printed in The Visitor, is placed here, being too minute

and particular to be inferted in the Life.

Every Art is best taught by example. Nothing contributes more to the cultivation of propriety than remarks on the works of those who have most excelled. I shall therefore endeavour, at this visit, to entertain the young students in poetry, with an examination of Pope's Epitaphs.

To define an epitaph is useless; every one knows that it is an inscription on a tomb. An epitaph, therefore, implies no particular character of writing, but may be composed in verse or prose. It is indeed commonly panegyrical; because we are seldom distinguished with a stone but by our friends; but it has no rule to restrain or mollify it, except this, that it ought not to be longer than common beholders may be expected to have leisure and patience to peruse.

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On CHARLES Earl of DORSET, in the Church of Wy-

Dorfet, the grace of courts, the Muse's pride, Patron of arts, and judge of nature, dy'd. The scourge of pride, though sanctify'd or great, Of sops in learning, and of knaves in state; Yet soft in nature, though severe his lay, His anger moral, and his wisdom gay. Blest satyrist! who touch'd the mean so true, As show'd, Vice had his hate and pity too. Blest courtier! who could king and country please, Yet sacred kept his friendship, and his ease. Blest peer! his great foresather's every grace Reslecting, and reslected on his race; Where other Buckhursts, other Dorfets shine, And patriots still, or poets, deck the line.

The first distich of this epitaph contains a kind of information which sew would want, that the man, for whom the tomb was erected, died. There are indeed some qualities worthy of praise ascribed to the dead, but none that were likely to exempt him from the lot of man, or incline us much to wonder that he should die. What is meant by judge of nature, is not L 2

eafy to fay. Nature is not the object of human judgment; for it is vain to judge where we cannot alter. If by nature is meant, what is commonly called nature by the critics, a just representation of things really existing, and actions really performed, nature cannot be properly opposed to art; nature being, in this sense, only the best effect of art.

The scourge of pride.

Of this couplet, the fecond line is not, what is intended, an illustration of the former. Pride, in the Great, is indeed well enough connected with knaves in state, though knaves is a word rather too ludicrous and light; but the mention of fanctified pride will not lead the thoughts to fops in learning, but rather to some species of tyranny or oppression, something more gloomy and more formidable than soppery.

Yet foft his nature-

This is a high compliment, but was not first bestowed on Dorset by Pope. The next verse is extremely beautiful.

Bleft fatyrift!-

In this diftich is another line of which Pope was not the author. I do not mean to blame these imitations with much harshness; in long performances they are scarcely to be avoided, and in shorter they may be indulged, because the train of the composition may naturally involve them, or the scantiness of the subject allow little choice. However, what is borrowed is not to be enjoyed as our own, and it is the business of critical justice to give every bird of the Muses his proper feather.

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Blest courtier !-

Whether a courtier can properly be commended for keeping his eale facred, may perhaps be disputable. To please king and country, without facrificing friendship to any change of times, was a very uncommon instance of prudence or felicity, and deserved to be kept separate from so poor a commendation as care of his ease. I wish our poets would attend a little more accurately to the use of the word sacred, which surely should never be applied in a serious composition, but where some reference may be made to a higher Being, or where some duty is exacted or implied. A man may keep his friendship sacred, because promises of friendship are very awful ties; but methinks he cannot, but in a burlesque sense, be said to keep his ease sacred.

Blest peer !

The bleffing ascribed to the peer has no connection with his peerage; they might happen to any other man, whose ancestors were remembered, or whose posterity were likely to be regarded.

I know not whether this epitaph be worthy either ?

of the writer or of the man entombed.

II.

On Sir WILLIAM TRUMBAL, one of the principal Secretaries of State to King WILLIAM III, who, howing refigned his place, died in his retirement at Easthamstead in Berkshire, 1716.

A pleafing form, a firm, yet cautious mind, Sincere, though prudent; constant, yet resign'd; Honour unchang'd, a principle profest, Fix'd to one side, but moderate to the rest:

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An honest courtier, yet a patriot too,
Just to his prince, and to his country too.
Fill'd with the sense of age, the fire of youth,
A scorn of wrangling, yet a zeal for truth;
A generous faith, from superstition free;
A love to peace, and hate of tyranny;
Such this man was; who now, from earth remov'd,
At length enjoys that liberty he lov'd.

In this epitaph, as in many others, there appears, at the first view, a fault which I think scarcely any beauty can compensate. The name is omitted. The end of an epitaph is to convey some account of the dead; and to what purpose is any thing told of him whose name is concealed? An epitaph, and a history, of a nameless hero, are equally absurd, since the virtues and qualities so recounted in either, are scattered at the mercy of fortune to be appropriated by guess. The name, it is true, may be read upon the stone; but what obligation has it to the poet, whose verses wander over the earth, and leave their subject behind them, and who is forced, like an unskilful painter, to make his purpose known by adventitious help?

This epitaph is wholly without elevation, and contains nothing striking or particular; but the poet is not to be blamed for the defects of his subject. He faid perhaps the best that could be said. There are, however, some defects which were not made necessary by the character in which he was employed. There is no opposition between an honest courtier and a partiot; for an honest courtier cannot but be a patriot.

It was unfuitable to the nicety required in short compositions, to close his verse with the word too; every rhyme should be a word of emphasis, nor can this rule be safely neglected, except where the length of the poem makes slight inaccuracies excusable, or allows room for beauties sufficient to overpower the effects of petty saults.

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At the beginning of the feventh line the word filled is weak and profaic, having no particular adaptation

to any of the words that follow it.

The thought in the last line is impertinent, having no connexion with the foregoing character, nor with the condition of the man described. Had the epitaph been written on the poor conspirator * who died lately in prison, after a consinement of more than forty years, without any crime proved against him, the sentiment had been just and pathetical; but why should Trumbal be congratulated upon his liberty, who had never known restraint?

III.

On the Hon. SIMON HARCOURT, only Son of the Lord Chancellor HARCOURT, at the Church of Stanton-Harcourt in Oxfordsbire, 1720.

To this fad shrine, whoe'er thou art draw dear, Here lies the friend most lov'd, the son most dear: Who ne'er knew joy, but friendship might divide, Or gave his father grief but when he dy'd.

How vain is reason, eloquence how weak!

If Pope must tell what Harcourt cannot speak.

Oh, let thy once-lov'd friend inscribe thy stone,

And with a father's forrows mix his own!

This epitaph is principally remarkable for the artful introduction of the name, which is inferted with a peculiar felicity, to which chance must concur with genius, which no man can hope to attain twice, and which cannot be copied but with servile imitation.

I cannot but wish that, of this inscription, the two last lines had been omitted, as they take away from the energy what they do not add to the sense.

^{*} Bernardi.

IV.

On JAMES CRAGGS, Esq; in Westminster Abbey.

JACOBUS CRAGGS,

REGI MAGNAE BRITANNIAE A SECRETIS

ET CONSILIIS SANCTIORIBVS

PRINCIPIS PARITER AC POPULI AMOR ET

DELICIAE:

VIXIT TITULIS ET INVIDIA MAJOR, ANNOS HEV PAVCOS, XXXV. OB. FEB. XVI. MDCCXX,

Statefman, yet friend to truth! of foul fincere, In action faithful, and in honour clear! Who broke no promife, ferv'd no private end, Who gain'd no title, and who loft no friend; Ennoted by himfelf, by all approv'd, Prais'd, wept, and honour'd, by the Muse he lov'd.

The lines on Craggs were not originally intended for an epitaph; and therefore some faults are to be imputed to the violence with which they are torn from the poem that first contained them. We may, however, observe some defects. There is a redundancy of words in the first couplet: it is superstuous to tell of him, who was fincere, true, and faithful, that he was in honour clear.

There feems to be an opposition intended in the fourth line, which is not very obvious: where is the relation between the two positions, that he gained no title and lost no friend?

It may be proper here to remark the absurdity of joining, in the same inscription, Latin and English, or verse and prose. If either language be preserable to

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the other, let that only be used; for no reason can be given why part of the information should be given in one tongue, and part in another, on a tomb, more than in any other place, on any other occasion; and to tell all that can be conveniently told in verse, and then to call in the help of prose, has always the appearance of a very artless expedient, or of an attempt unaccomplished. Such an epitaph resembles the conversation of a foreigner, who tells part of his meaning by words, and conveys part by signs.

V.

Intended for Mr Rowe. In Westminster-Abbey.

Thy reliques, Rowe, to this fair urn we trust, And facred, place by Dryden's awful dust: Beneath a rude and nameless stone he lies, To which thy tomb shall guide enquiring eyes. Peace to thy gentle shade, and endless rest! Blest in thy genius, in thy love too blest! One grateful woman to thy same supplies What a whole thankless land to his denies.

Of this inscription the chief fault is, that it belongs less to Rowe, for whom it was written, than to Dryden, who was buried near him; and indeed gives very little information concerning either.

To wish, Peace to thy shade, is too mythological to be admitted into a christian temple: the ancient worship has infected almost all our other compositions, and might therefore be contented to spare our epitaphs. Let siction, at least, cease with life, and let us be serious over the grave.

VI.

On Mrs CORBET. who died of a Cancer in her Breaft.

Here rests a woman, good without pretence, Blest with plain reason, and with sober sense: No conquest she, but o'er herself desir'd; No arts essay'd, but not to be admir'd. Passion and pride were to her soul unknown, Convinc'd that Virtue only is our own. So unaffected, so compos'd a mind, So sirm, yet soft, so strong, yet so resin'd, Heaven, as its purest gold, by tortures try'd, The saint sustain'd, but the woman dy'd.

I have always confidered this as the most valuable of all Pope's epitaphs; the subject of it is a character not discriminated by any shining or eminent peculiarities; yet that which really makes, though not the fplendour, the felicity of life, and that which every wife man will chuse for his final and lasting companion in the langour of age, in the quiet of privacy, when he departs weary and difgusted from the ostentatious, the volatile, and the vain. Of fuch a character, which the dull overlook, and the gay despise, it was fit that the value should be made known, and the dignity established. Domestic virtue, as it is exerted without great occasions, or conspicuous consequences, in an even unnoted tenor, required the genius of Pope to display it in such a manner as might attract regard, and enforce reverence. Who can forbear to lament that this amiable woman has no name in the verses?

If the particular lines of this infcription be examined, it will appear less faulty than the rest. There is scarce one line taken from common places, unless it be that in which only Virtue is said to be our own. I

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once heard a Lady of great beauty and excellence object to the fourth line, that it contained an unnatural and incredible panegyric. Of this let the Ladies judge.

VII.

On the Monument of the Hon. ROBERT DIGBY, and of his Sister MARY, erected by their Father the Lord DIGBY, in the Church of Sherborne in Dorsetshire, 1727.

Go! fair example of untainted youth,
Of modest wisdom, and pacific truth:
Compos'd in sufferings, and in joy sedate,
Good without noise, without pretension great.
Just of thy word, in every thought sincere,
Who knew no wish but what the world might hear:
Of softest manners, unaffected mind,
Lover of peace, and friend of human kind:
Go, live! for heaven's eternal year is thine,
Go, and exalt thy mortal to divine.

And thou, bleft maid! attendant on his doom, Penfive haft follow'd to the filent tomb, Steer'd the fame course to the fame quiet shore, Not parted long, and now to part no more! Go, then, where only bliss fincere is known! Go, where to love and to enjoy are one!

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Yet take these tears, Mortality's relief; And till we share your joys, forgive our grief: These little rites, a stone, a verse receive, 'Tis all a father, all a friend can give!

This epitaph contains of the brother only a general indifcriminate character, and of the fifter tells nothing but that she died. The difficulty in writing epitaphs is to give a particular and appropriate praise. This, however, is not always to be performed, whatever be

the diligence or ability of the writer; for the greater part of mankind have no character at all, have little that diffinguishes them from others equally good or bad, and therefore nothing can be faid of them which may not be applied with equal propriety to a thousand more. It is indeed no great panegyric, that there is inclosed in this tomb one who was born in one year, and died in another; yet many useful and amiable lives have been spent, which yet leave little materials for any other memorial. These are however not the proper subjects of poetry; and whenever friendship, or any other motive, obliges a poet to write on such subjects, he must be forgiven if he sometimes wanders in generalities, and utters the same praises over different tombs.

The fcantiness of human praises can scarcely be made more apparent, than by remarking how often Pope has, in the sew epitaphs which he composed, found it necessary to borrow from himself. The fourteen epitaphs, which he has written, comprise about an hundred and forty lines, in which there are more repetitions than will easily be found in all the rest of his works. In the eight lines which make the character of Digby, there is scarce any thought, or word, which may not be found in the other epitaphs.

The ninth line, which is far the strongest and most elegant, is borrowed from Dryden. The conclusion is the same with that on Harcourt, but is here more

elegant and better connected.

VIII.

On Sir GODFREY KNELLER. In Westminster-Abbey, 1723.

Kneller, by heaven, and not a master taught, Whose art was nature, and whose pictures thought; Now Now for two ages, having snatch'd from fate Whate'er was beauteous, or whate'er was great, Lies crown'd with Princes honours, Poets lays, Due to his merit, and brave thirst of praise.

Living, great Nature fear'd he might outvie Her works; and dying, fears herfelf may die.

Of this epitaph the first couplet is good, the second not bad, the third is deformed with a broken metaphor, the word crowned not being applicable to the honours or the lays, and the fourth is not only borrowed from the epitaph on Raphael, but of very harsh construction.

IX.

On General HENRY WITHERS. In Westminster-Abbey, 1729.

Here, Withers, rest! thou bravest, gentlest mind, Thy country's friend, but more of human kind, O! born to arms! O! worth in youth approv'd! O! fost humanity in age belov'd! For thee the hardy veteran drops a tear, And the gay courtier feels the figh fincere.

Withers, adieu! yet not with thee remove Thy martial spirit, or thy social love! Amidst corruption, luxury and rage, Still leave some ancient virtues to our age: Nor let us say (those English glories gone) The last true Briton lies beneath this stone.

The epitaph on Withers affords another instance of common places, though somewhat diversified, by mingled qualities, and the peculiarity of a profession.

The fecond couplet is abrupt, general, and unpleafing; exclamation feldom fucceeds in our language; Vol. IV. M and. and, I think, it may be observed that the particle O! used at the beginning of a sentence, always offends.

The third couplet is more happy; the value expreffed for him, by different forts of men, raises him to esteem; there is yet something of the common cant of superficial satirists, who suppose that the infincerity of a courtier destroys all his sensations, and that he is equally a diffembler to the living and the dead.

At the third couplet I should wish the epitaph to close, but that I should be unwilling to lose the two next lines, which yet are dearly bought if they cannot

be retained without the four that follow them.

X.

On Mr Elijah Fenton. At Easthamstead in Berkshire, 1730.

This modest stone, what few vain marbles can,
May truly say, Here lies an honest man:
A poet, blest beyond the poet's fate,
Whom Heaven kept sacred from the Proud and
Great:

Foe to loud praise, and friend to learned ease, Content with science in the vale of peace. Calmly he look'd on either life; and here Saw nothing to regret, or there to fear; From Nature's temperate feast rose satisfy'd, Thank'd heaven that he had liv'd, and that he dy'd.

The first couplet of this epitaph is borrowed from Crashaw. The four next lines contain a species of praise peculiar, original, and just. Here, therefore, the inscription should have ended, the latter part containing nothing but what is common to every man who is wise and good. The character of Fenton was so amiable, that I cannot forbear to wish for some poet or biographer to display it more fully for the advantage of posterity.

sterity. If he did not stand in the first rank of genius, he may claim a place in the second; and, whatever criticism may object to his writings, censure could find very little to blame in his life.

XI.

On Mr GAY. In Westminster-Abbey, 1732.

Of manners gentle, of affections mild; In wit, a man; fimplicity, a child: With native humour tempering virtuous rage, Form'd to delight at once and lash the age: Above temptation, in a low estate, And uncorrupted, ev'n among the Great: A safe companion, and ar easy friend, Unblam'd through life, lamented in thy end. These are thy honours! not that here thy bust Is mix'd with heroes, or with kings thy dust; But that the Worthy and the Good shall say, Striking their pensive bosoms—Here lies Gay.

As Gay was the favourite of our author, this epitaph was probably written with an uncommon degree of attention; yet it is not more successfully executed than the rest, for it will not always happen that the success of a poet is proportionate to his labour. The same observation may be extended to all works of imagination, which are often influenced by causes wholly out of the performer's power, by hints of which he perceives not the origin, by sudden elevations of mind which he cannot produce in himself, and which sometimes rise when he expects them least.

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The two parts of the first line are only echoes of each other; gentle manners and mild affections, if they mean any thing, must mean the same.

That Gay was a man in wit is a very frigid commen-M 2 dation; dation; to have the wit of a man is not much for a poet. The wit of Man, and the simplicity of a child, make a poor and vulgar contrast, and raise no ideas of excellence, either intellectual or moral.

In the next couplet rage is less properly introduced after the mention of mildness and gentleness, which are made the constituents of his character; for a man so mild and gentle to temper his rage, was not difficult.

The next line is unharmonious in its found, and mean in its conception; the opposition is obvious, and the word last used absolutely, and without any modi-

fication, is groß and improper.

To be above temptation in poverty, and free from corruption among the Great, is indeed such a peculiarity as deserved notice. But to be a safe companion is praise merely negative, arising not from the possession of virtue, but the absence of vice, and that one of the most odious.

As little can be added to his character, by afferting that he was lamented in his end. Every man that dies is, at least by the writer of his epitaph, supposed to be lamented, and therefore this general lamentation does no honour to Gay.

The first eight lines have no grammar; the adjectives are without any substantive, and the epithets

without a subject.

The thought in the last line, that Gay is buried in the bosoms of the worthy and the good, who are distinguished only to lengthen the line, is so dark that few understand it; and so harsh, when it is explained, that still fewer approve.

Intended for Sir ISAAC NEWTON. In Westminster- Abbey.

ISAACUS NEWTONIUS: Quem Immortalem Testantur, Tempus, Natura, Cælum: Mortalem Hoc marmor fatetur.

Nature, and Nature's laws, lay hid in night, God faid, Let Newton be! And all was light.

Of this epitaph, short as it is, the faults feem not to be very few. Why part should be Latin and part English, it is not easy to discover. In the Latin, the opposition of Immortalis and Mortalis, is a mere found, or a mere quibble; he is not immortal in any fense contrary to that in which he is mertal.

In the verses the thought is obvious, and the words night and light are too nearly allied.

XIII.

On EDMUND Duke of BUCKINGHAM, who died in the 19th Year of his Age, 1735.

If modest youth, with cool reflection crown'd, And every opening virtue blooming round, Could fave a parent's justest pride from fate, Or add one patriot to a finking state; This weeping marble had not ask'd thy tear, Or fadly told, how many hopes lie here! The living virtue now had shone approv'd, The fenate heard him, and his country lov'd. M 3

Yet foster honours, and less noisy fame Attend the shade of gentle Buckingham: In whom a race, for courage fam'd and art, Ends in the milder merit of the heart; And chiefs or fages long to Britain given, Pays the last tribute of a faint to heaven.

This epitaph Mr Warburton prefers to the rest, but I know not for what reason. To crown with respection is surely a mode of speech approaching to non-sense. Opening virtues blooming round, is something like tautology; the six sollowing lines are poor and prosaic. Art is in another couplet used for arts, that a rhyme may be had to heart. The six last lines are the best, but not excellent.

The rest of his sepulchral performances hardly deferve the notice of criticism. The contemptible Dialogue between HE and SHE should have been suppressed

for the author's fake.

In his last epitaph on himself, in which he attempts to be jocular upon one of the few things that make wise men serious, he consounds the living man with the dead:

Under this flone, or under this fill, Or under this turf, &c.

When a man is once buried, the question, under what he is buried, is easily decided. He forgot that though he wrote the epitaph in a state of uncertainty, yet it could not be laid over him till his grave was made. Such is the folly of wit when it is ill employed.

The world has but little new; even this wretchedness seems to have been borrowed from the following

tuneless lines:

Ludovici Areosti humantur ossa Sub hoc marmore, vel sub hac humo, seu Sub quicquid voluit benignus hæres Sive hærede benignior comes, feu Opportunius incidens Viator; Nam fcire haud potuit fatura, fed nec Tanti erat vacuum fibi cadaver Ut utnam cuperet parare vivens, Vivens ifta tamen fibi paravit. Quæ infcribi voluit fuo fepulchro Olim fiquod haberetis fepulchrum.

Surely Ariosto did not venture to expect that his trifle would have ever had such an illustrious imitator.

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PITT.

PITT

CHRISTOPHER PITT, of whom whatever I and thall relate, more than has been already published, I owe to the kind communication of Dr Warton, was born in 1699 at Blandford, the fon of a physician much esteemed.

He was, in 1714, received as a scholar into Winchester College, where he was distinguished by exercises of uncommon elegance; and, at his removal to New College in 1719, presented to the electors, as the product of his private and voluntary studies, a complete version of Lucan's poem, which he did not then know to have been translated by Rowe.

This is an instance of early diligence which well deserves to be recorded. The suppression of such a work, recommended by such uncommon circumstances, is to be regretted. It is indeed culpable, to load libraries with superstuous books; but incitements to early excellence are never superstuous, and from this example the danger is not great of many imitations.

When he had refided at his College three years, he was presented to the rectory of Pimpern in Dorset-shire (1722), by his relation, Mr Pitt of Stratfeildsea

in Hampshire; and, refigning his fellowship, continued at Oxford two years longer, till he became Ma-

fter of Arts (1724).

He probably about this time translated Vida's Art of Poetry, which Tristram's splendid edition had then made popular. In this translation he distinguished himself, both by its general elegance, and by the skillful adaptation of his numbers, to the images expressed; a beauty which Vida has with great ardour en-

forced and exemplified.

He then retired to his living, a place very pleafing by its fituation, and therefore likely to excite the imagination of a poet; where he passed the rest of his life, reverenced for his virtue, and beloved for the softness of his temper and the easiness of his manners. Before strangers he had something of the scholar's timidity or distrust; but when he became familiar, he was in a very high degree chearful and entertaining. His general benevolence procured general respect; and he passed a life placid and honourable, neither too great for the kindness of the low, nor too low for the notice of the great.

At what time he composed his miscellany, published in 1727, it is not easy nor necessary to know: those which have dates appear to have been very early productions, and I have not observed that any rise a-

bove mediocrity.

The fuccess of his Vida animated him to a higher undertaking; and in his thirtieth year he published a version of the first book of the Eneid. This being, I suppose, commended by his friends, he some time afterwards added three or sour more; with an advertisement, in which he represents himself as translating with great indifference, and with a progress of which himself was hardly conscious. This can hardly be true, and, if true, is nothing to the reader.

At last, without any further contention with his modesty, or any awe of the name of Dryden, he gave

us a complete English Eneid, which I am forry not to see joined in the late publication with his other poems. It would have been pleasing to have an opportunity of comparing the two best translations that perhaps were ever produced by one nation of the same author.

Pitt engaging as a rival with Dryden, naturally obferved his failures, and avoided them; and, as he
wrote after Pope's Iliad, he had an example of an exact, equable, and fplendid verification. With these
advantages, seconded by great diligence, he might
successfully labour particular passages, and escape many errors. If the two versions are compared, perhaps the result would be, that Dryden leads the reader
forward by his general vigour and sprightliness, and
Pitt often stops him to contemplate the excellence of
a single couplet; that Dryden's faults are forgotten
in the hurry of delight, and that Pitt's beauties are
neglected in the langour of a cold and listless perusal;
that Pitt pleases the critics, and Dryden the people;
that Pitt is quoted, and Dryden read.

He did not long enjoy the reputation which this great work defervedly conferred; for he left the world in 1748, and lies buried under a stone at Bland.

ford, on which is this infcription:

In memory of
CHR. PITT, clerk, M. A.
Very eminent
for his talents in poetry;
and yet more
for the univerfal candour of
his mind, and the primitive
fimplicity of his manners.
He lived innocent,
and died beloved,
Apr. 13, 1748,
aged 48.

THOMSON.

THOMSON.

James THOMSON, the fon of a minister well esteemed for his piety and diligence, was born September 7, 1700, at Ednam, in the shire of Roxburgh, of which his father was pastor. His mother, whose name was Hume, inherited as co-heiress a portion of a small estate. The revenue of a parish in Scotland is seldom large, and it was probably in commiseration of the difficulty with which Mr Thomson supported his family, having nine children, that Mr Riccarton, a neighbouring minister, discovering in James uncommon promises of suture excellence, undertook to superintend his education, and provide him books.

He was taught the common rudiments of learning at the school of Jedburgh, a place which he delights to recollect in his poem of Autumn; but was not considered by his master as superior to common boys, though in those early days he amused his patron and his friends with poetical compositions; with which however he so little pleased himself, that on every new-year's day he threw into the sire all the productions of the foregoing year.

From the school he was removed to Edinburgh,

where he had not refided two years when his father died, and left all his children to the care of their mother, who raifed upon her little estate what money a mortgage could afford, and, removing with her family to Edinburgh, lived to see her son rising into eminence.

The defign of Thomson's friends was to breed him a minister. He lived at Edinburgh, as at school, without distinction or expectation, till, at the usual time, he performed a probationary exercise by explaining a psalm. His diction was so poetically splendid, that Mr Hamilton, the professor of Divinity, reproved him for speaking language unintelligible to a popular audience, and he censured one of his expressions as indecent, if not profane.

This rebuke is reported to have repressed his thoughts of an ecclesiastical character, and he probably cultivated with new diligence his blossoms of poetry, which however were in some danger of a blast; for, submitting his productions to some who thought themselves qualified to criticise, he heard of nothing but faults, but, finding other judges more favourable, he did not suffer himself to fink into despondence.

He eafily discovered that the only stage on which a poet could appear, with any hope of advantage, was London; a place too wide for the operation of petty competition and private malignity, where merit might soon become conspicuous, and would find friends as soon as it became reputable to befriend it. A lady, who was acquainted with his mother, advised him to the journey, and promised some countenance or assistance, which at last he never received; however, he justified his adventure by her encouragement, and came to seek in London patronage and same.

At his arrival he found his way to Mr Mallet, then tutor to the fons of the duke of Montrose. He had recommendations to several persons of consequence, which he had tied carefully up in his handkerchief;

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but as he passed along the street, with the gaping curiosity of a new-comer, his attention was upon every thing rather than his pocket, and his magazine of

credentials was stolen from him.

His first want was of a pair of shoes. For the supply of all his necessities, his whole fund was his Winter, which for a time could find no purchaser; till, at last, Mr Millan was persuaded to buy it at a low price; and this low price he had for some time reason to regret; but, by accident, Mr Whatley, a man not wholly unknown among authors, happening to turn his eye upon it, was so delighted, that he ran from place to place celebrating its excellence. Thomson obtained likewise the notice of Aaron Hill, whom, being friendless and indigent, and glad of kindness, he courted with every expression of servile adulation.

Winter was dedicated to Sir Spencer Compton, but attracted no regard from him to the author; till Aaron Hill awakened his attention by some verses addressed to Thomson, and published in one of the newspapers, which censured the great for their neglect of ingenious men. Thomson then received a present of twenty guineas, of which he gives this account to

Mr Hill:

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"I hinted to you in my last, that on Saturday morning I was with Sir Spencer Compton. A certain
gentleman, without my desire, spoke to him concerning me; his ... wer was, that I had never come near
him. Then me gentleman put the question, If he
desired that I should wait on him? he returned, he
did. On this, the gentleman gave me an introductory Letter to him. He received me in what they
commonly call a civil manner; asked me some
common-place questions, and made me a present
of twenty guineas. I am very ready to own that
the present was larger than my performance deferved; and shall ascribe it to his generosity, or any
other cause, rather than the merit of the address."

Not. IV.

The poem, which, being of a new kind, few would venture at first to like, by degrees gained upon the public; and one edition was very speedily succeeded

by another.

Thomson's credit was now high, and every day brought him new friends; among others Dr.Rundle, a man afterwards unfortunately famous, sought his acquaintance, and found his qualities such, that he recommended him to the lord chancellor Talbot.

Winter was accompanied, in many editions, not only with a preface and a dedication, but with poetical praises by Mr Hill, Mr Mallet (then Malloch), and Mira, the sictitious name of a lady once too well known. Why the dedications are, to Winter and the other seasons, contrarily to custom, left out in the col-

lected works, the reader may enquire.

The next year (17.7) he distinguished himself by three publications; of Summer, in pursuance of his plan; of a Poem on the Death of Sir Isaac Newton, which he was enabled to perform as an exact philosopher by the instruction of Mr Grey; and of Britannia, a kind of poetical invective against the ministry, whom the nation then thought not forward enough in resenting the depredations of the Spaniards. By this piece he declared himself an adherent to the opposition, and had therefore no favour to expect from the Court.

Thomson, having been some tin entertained in the family of the lord Binning, was desirous of testifying his gratitude by making him the patron of his Summer; but the same kindness which had first disposed lord Binning to encourage him, determined him to resuse the dedication, which was by his advice addressed to Mr Doddington; a man who had more power to advance the reputation and fortune of a poet.

Spring was published next year, with a dedication to the counters of Hertford; whose practice it was to invite

invite every Summer some poet into the country, to hear her verses, and affist her studies. This honour was one Summer conferred on Thomson, who took more delight in carousing with lord Hertford and his friends than affisting her ladyship's poetical operations, and therefore never received another summons.

Autumn, the feason to which the Spring and Summer are preparatory, still remained unsung, and was delayed till he published (1730) his works collected.

He produced in 1727 the tragedy of Sophonisha, which raised such expectation, that every rehearfal was dignissed with a splendid audience, collected to anticipate the delight that was preparing for the public. It was observed however that nobody was much affected, and that the company rose as from a moral lecture.

It had upon the stage no unusual degree of success. Slight accidents will operate upon the taste of pleasure. There was a feeble line in the play;

O Sophonisba, Sophonisba, O!

This gave occasion to a waggish parody;

O, Jemmy Thomson, Jemmy Thomson, O!

which for a while was echoed through the town.

I have been told by Savage, that of the Prologue to Sophonisha the first part was written by Pope, who could not be persuaded to finish it, and that the concluding lines were added by Mallet.

Thomson was not long afterwards, by the influence of Dr Rundle, sent to travel with Mr Charles Talbot, the eldest son of the Chancellor. He was yet young enough to receive new impressions, to have his opinions rectified, and his views enlarged; nor can he be supposed to have wanted that curiosity which is N 2 inseparable.

inseparable from an active and comprehensive mind. He may therefore now be supposed to have revelled in all the joys of intellectual luxury; he was every day feasted with instructive novelties; he lived splendidly without expence, and might expect when he returned home a certain establishment.

At this time a long course of opposition to Sir Robert Walpole had filled the nation with clamours for liberty, of which no man felt the want, and with care for liberty, which was not in danger. Thomson, in his travels on the continent, found or fancied fo many evils arising from the tyranny of other governments, that he refolved to write a very long poem, in five parts, upon Liberty.

While he was bufy on the first book, Mr Talbot died; and Thomson, who had been rewarded for his attendance by the place of fecretary of the Briefs, pays in the initial lines a decent tribute to his memory.

Upon this great poem two years were spent, and the author congratulated himself upon it as his noblest work; but an author and his reader are not always of a mind. Liberty called in vain upon her votaries to read her praises and reward her encomiast: her praises were condemned to harbour spiders, and to gather dust; none of Thomson's performances were fo little regarded.

The judgment of the public was not erroneous; the recurrence of the fame images must tire in time; an enumeration of examples to prove a position which nobody denied, as it was from the beginning fuper-

fluous, must quickly grow difgusting.

The poem of Literty does not now appear in its original state; but when the author's works were collected, after his death, was shortened by Sir George Lyttelton, with a liberty which, as it has a manifest tendency to leffen the confidence of fociety, and to confound the characters of authors, by making one man write by the judgment of another, cannot be justified

justified by any supposed propriety of the alteration, or kindness of the friend.—I wish to see it exhibited as its author left it.

Thomson now lived in ease and plenty, and seems for a while to have suspended his poetry; but he was soon called back to labour by the death of the Chancellor, for his place then became vacant; and though the lord Hardwicke delayed for some time to give it away, Thomson's bashfulness, or pride, or some other motive perhaps not more laudable, withheld him from soliciting; and the new Chancellor would not give him what he would not ask.

He now relapsed to his former indigence; but the prince of Wales was at that time struggling for popularity, and by the influence of Mr Lyttelton professed himself the patron of wit: to him Thomson was introduced, and being gaily interrogated about the state of his affairs, said, that they were in a more poetical possure than formerly; and had a pension allowed him of one hundred pounds a year.

Being now obliged to write, he produced (1738) the tragedy of Agamemnon, which was much shortened in the representation. It had the fate which most commonly attends mythological stories, and was only endured, but not favoured. It struggled with such difficulty through the first night, that Thomson, coming late to his friends with whom he was to sup, excused his delay by telling them how the sweat of his distress had so disordered his wig, that he could not come till he had been resitted by a barber.

He so interested himself in his own drama, that, if I remember right, as he sat in the upper gallery he accompanied the players by audible recitation, till a friendly hint frighted him to silence. Pope countenanced Agamemnon, by coming to it the first night, and was welcomed to the theatre by a general chap; he had much regard for Thomson, and once expressed it in a poetical Epistle sent to Italy, of which however

N.3.

he abated the value, by transplanting some of the lines

into his Epistle to Arbuthnot.

About this time the Act was passed for licensing plays, of which the first operation was the prohibition of Gustavus Vasa, a tragedy of Mr Brooke, whom the public recompensed by a very liberal subscription; the next was the resulal of Edward and Electora, offered by Thomson. It is hard to discover why either play should have been obstructed. Thomson likewise endeavoured to repair his loss by a subscription, of which I cannot now tell the success.

When the public murmured at the unkind treatment of Thomson, one of the ministerial writers remarked, that he had taken a Liberty which was not a-

greeable to Britannia in any Seafon.

He was foon after employed, in conjunction with Mr Mallet, to write the Masque of Alfred, which was

acted before the Prince at Cliefden-house.

His next work (1745) was Tancred and Sigismunda, the most successful of all his tragedies; for it still keeps its turn upon the stage. It may be doubted whether he was, either by the bent of nature or habits of study, much qualified for tragedy. It does not appear that he had much sense of the pathetic, and his dissure and descriptive style produced declamation rather than dialogue.

His friend Mr Lyttelton was now in power, and conferred upon him the office of surveyor-general of the Leeward Islands; from which, when his deputy was paid, he received about three hundred

pounds a year.

The last piece that he lived to publish was the Coffle of Indolence, which was many years under his hand, but was at last finished with great accuracy. The first canto opens a scene of lazy luxury, that fills the imagination.

He was now at ease, but was not long to enjoy it; for, by taking cold on the water between London and

Kew,

Kew, he caught a disorder, which, with some careless exasperation, ended in a sever that put an end to his life, August 27, 1748. He was buried in the church of Richmond, without an inscription; but a monument has been erected to his memory in Westminster-abbey.

Thomson was of stature above the middle size, and more fat than bard beseems, of a dull countenance, and a gross, unanimated, uninviting appearance; silent in mingled company, but chearful among select friends, and by his friends very tenderly and warmly beloved.

He left behind him the tragedy of Coriolanus, which was, by the zeal of his patron Sir George Lyttelton, brought upon the stage for the benefit of his family, and recommended by a Prologue, which Quin, who had long lived with Thomson in fond intimacy, spoke in fuch a manner as shewed him to be, on that occafion, no actor. The commencement of this benevolence is very honourable to Quin; who is reported to have delivered Thomson, then known to him only for his genius, from an arrest, by a very considerable present; and its continuance is honourable to both; for friendship is not always the sequel of obligation. By this tragedy a confiderable fum was raifed, of which part discharged his debts, and the rest was remitted to his fifters, whom, however removed from them by place or condition, he regarded with great tenderness, as will appear by the following Letter, which I communicate with much pleasure, as it gives me at once an opportunity of recording the fraternal kindness of Thomson, and reslecting on the friendly affistance of Mr Boswell, from whom I received it.

" Hagley in Worcestershire, "October the 4th, 1747.

" My dear Sifter,

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"I thought you had known me better than to interpret my filence into a decay of affection, especial"to increase than diminish it. Don't imagine, because I am a bad correspondent, that I can ever
prove an unkind friend and brother. I must do
myself the justice to tell you, that my affections are
naturally very fixed and constant; and if I had
ever reason of complaint against you (of which by
the bye I have not the least shadow), I am conscious
of so many defects in myself, as dispose me to be

" not a little charitable and forgiving.

"It gives me the truest heart-felt satisfaction to "hear you have a good kind husband, and are in easy " contented circumstances; but were they otherwise, " that would only awaken and heighten my tender-" ness towards you. As our good and tender-hearted " parents did not live to receive any material testimo-" nies of that highest human gratitude I owed them " (than which nothing could have given me equal "pleafure,) the only return I can make them now is " by kindness to those they left behind them: would " to God poor Lizy had lived longer, to have been a " farther witness of the truth of what I say; and that "I might have had the pleafure of feeing once more " a fifter, who fo truly deferved my esteem and love. "But she is happy, while we must toil a little longer " here below: let us however do it chearfully and " gratefully, supported by the pleasing hope of meet-" ing yet again on a fafer shore, where to recollect the " ftorms and difficulties of life will not perhaps be in-" confistent with that blissful state. You did right " to call your daughter by her name; for you must " needs have had a particular tender friendship for " one another, endeared as you were by nature, by " having paffed the affectionate years of your youth " together; and by that great foftner and engager of " hearts, mutual hardship. That it was in my power " to ease it a little, I account one of the most exquies fitte " fite pleasures of my life. - But enough of this me-

" lancholy though not unpleasing strain.

"I esteem you for your sensible and disinterested advice to Mr Bell, as you will fee by my Letter to " him: as I approve entirely of his marrying again, "you may readily ask me why I don't marry at all. "My circumstances have hitherto been so variable " and uncertain in this fluctuating world, as induce " to keep me from engaging in fuch a state: and now, "though they are more settled, and of late (which "you will be glad to hear) confiderably improved, I " begin to think myself too far advanced in life for " fuch youthful undertakings, not to mention fome o-" ther petty reasons that are apt to startle the delicacy " of difficult old batchelors. I am, however, not a " little suspicious that was I to pay a visit to Scotland " (which I have fome thoughts of doing foon) I might "possibly be tempted to think of a thing not easily " repaired if done amifs. I have always been of opi-" nion that none make better wives than the ladies " of Scotland; and yet, who more forfaken than they, " while the gentlemen are continually running abroad "all the world over? Some of them, it is true, are "wife enough to return for a wife. You fee I am " beginning to make interest already with the Scots " ladies .-- But no more of this infectious fubject ---"Pray let me hear from you now and then; and "though I am not a regular correspondent, yet per-" haps I may mend in that respect. Remember me "kindly to your husband, and believe me to be,

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"Your most affectionate brother,
"James Thomson."

(Addressed) "To Mrs Thomson in Lanark."

The benevolence of Thomson was fervid, but not active; he would give, on all occasions, what affistance his purse would supply; but the offices of intervention

vention or folicitation he could not conquer his fluggifhness sufficiently to perform. The affairs of others, however, were not more neglected than his own. He had often felt the inconveniences of idleness, but he never cured it; and was so conscious of his own character, that he talked of writing an Eastern Tale of the Man who loved to be in Distress.

Among his peculiarities was a very unskilful and inarticulate manner of pronouncing any losty or solemn composition. He was once reading to Doddington, who, being himself a reader eminently elegant, was so much provoked by his odd utterance, that he snatched the paper from his hand, and told him that

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he did not understand his own verses.

The biographer of Thomson has remarked, that an author's life is best read in his works; his observation was not well-timed. Savage, who lived much with Thomson, once told me, how he heard a lady remarking that she could gather from his works three parts of his character, that he was a great Lover, a great Swimmer, and rigorously abstinent; but, said Savage, he knows not any love but that of the sex; he was perhaps never in cold water in his life; and he indulges himself in all the luxury that comes within his reach. Yet Savage always spoke with the most eager praise of his social qualities, his warmth and constancy of friendship, and his adherence to his first acquaintance when the advancement of his reputation had left them behind him.

As a writer, he is entitled to one praise of the highest kind: his mode of thinking, and of expressing his thoughts, is original. His blank verse is no more the blank verse of Milton, or of any other poet, than the rhymes of Prior are the rhymes of Cowley. His numbers, his pauses, his diction, are of his own growth, without transcription, without imitation. He thinks in a peculiar train, and he thinks always as a man of genius; he looks round on Nature and on Life, with the eye which Nature bestows only on a poet; the eye that distinguishes, in every thing presented to its view, whatever there is on which imagination can delight to be detained, and with a mind that at once comprehends the vast, and attends to the minute. The reader of the Seasons wonders that he never saw before what Thomson shews him, and that he never yet has felt what Thomson impresses.

His is one of the works in which blank verse seems properly used; Thomson's wide expansion of general views, and his enumeration of circumstantial varieties, would have been obstructed and embarrassed by the frequent intersection of the sense, which are the ne-

ceffary effects of rhyme.

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His descriptions of extended scenes and general effects bring before us the whole magnificence of Nature, whether pleasing or dreadful. The gaiety of Spring, the splendour of Summer, the tranquillity of Autumn, and the horror of Winter, take in their turns possession of the mind. The poet leads us through the appearances of things as they are successively varied by the vicissitudes of the year, and imparts to us so much of his own enthusiasm, that our thoughts expand with his imagery, and kindle with his sentiments. Nor is the naturalist without his part in the entertainment; for he is affished to recollect and to combine, to arrange his discoveries, and to amplify the sphere of his contemplation.

The great defect of the Seasons is want of method; but for this I know not that there was any remedy. Of many appearances substitting all at once, no rule can be given why one should be mentioned before another; yet the memory wants the help of order, and the curiosity is not excited by suspense or expec-

tation.

His diction is in the highest degree florid and luxuriant, such as may be said to be to his images and thoughts both their lustre and their shade; such as invest

veft them with splendour, through which perhaps they are not always easily discerned. It is too exuberant, and sometimes may be charged with filling the

ear more than the mind.

These Poems, with which I was acquainted at their first appearance, I have since found altered and enlarged by subsequent revisals, as the author supposed his judgment to grow more exact, and as books or conversation extended his knowledge and opened his prospects. They are, I think, improved in general; yet I know not whether they have not lost part of what Temple calls their race; a word which, applied to wines, in its primitive sense, means the slavour of the soil.

Liberty, when it first appeared, I tried to read, and foon desisted. I have never tried again, and therefore will not hazard either praise or censure.

The highest praise which he has received ought not to be supprest; it is said by Lord Lyttelton in the Prologue to his posthumous play, that his works contained

No line which, dying, he could wish to blot.

WATTS.

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WATTS.

THE Poems of Dr WATTS were by my recommendation inferted in the late Collection; the readers of which are to impute to me whatever pleafure or weariness they may find in the perusal of Blackmore, Watts, Pomfret, and Yalden.

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ISAAC WATTS was born July 17, 1674, at Southampton, where his father, of the fame name, kept a boarding-school for young gentlemen, though common report makes him a shoemaker. He appears, from the narrative of Dr Gibbons, to have been neither indigent nor illiterate.

Isaac, the eldest of nine children, was given to books from his infancy; and began, we are told, to learn Latin when he was four years old, I suppose, at home. He was afterwards taught Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, by Mr Pinhorn, a clergyman, master of the Free school at Southampton, to whom the gratitude of his scholar afterwards inscribed a Latin ode.

His proficiency at school was so conspicuous, that a subscription was proposed for his support at the University; but he declared his resolution to take his Vol. IV.

lot with the Diffenters. Such he was, as every Chri-

stian Church would rejoice to have adopted.

He therefore repaired in 1600 to an academy taught by Mr Rowe, where he had for his companions and fellow-students Mr Hughes the poet, and Dr Horte, afterwards Archbishop of Tuam. Some Latin Essays, supposed to have been written as exercises at this academy, shew a degree of knowledge, both philosophical and theological, such as very few attain by a much

longer course of study.

He was, as he hints in his Miscellanies, a maker of verses from sisteen to sisty, and in his youth he appears to have paid attention to Latin poetry. His verses to his brother, in the glyconic measure, written when he was seventeen, are remarkably easy and elegant. Some of his other odes are deformed by the Pindaric folly then prevailing, and are written with such neglect of all metrical rules as is without example among the ancients; but his diction, though perhaps not always exactly pure, has such copiousness and splendour, as shews that he was but at a very little distance from excellence.

His method of study was to impress the contents of his books upon his memory by abridging them, and by interleaving them to amplify one system with supplements from another.

With the congregation of his tutor Mr Rowe, who were, I believe, Independents, he communicated in

his nineteenth year.

At the age of twenty he left the academy, and fpent two years in study and devotion at the house of his father, who treated him with great tenderness; and had the happiness, indulged to few parents, of living to see his son eminent for literature and venerable for piety.

He was then entertained by Sir John Hartopp five years, as domestic tutor to his son; and in that time particularly devoted himself to the study of the Holy

Scriptures;

Scriptures; and being chosen affistant to Dr Chauncey, preached the first time on the birth-day that completed his twenty-fourth year; probably confidering that as the day of a fecond nativity, by which he

entered on a new period of existence.

In about three years he fucceeded Dr Chauncey; but, foon after his entrance on his charge, he was feized by a dangerous illness, which funk him to fuch weakness, that the congregation thought an affistant necessary, and appointed Mr Price. His health then returned gradually, and he performed his duty, till (1712) he was seized by a fever of such violence and continuance, that, from the feebleness which it brought

upon him, he never perfectly recovered.

This calamitous state made the compassion of his friends necessary, and drew upon him the attention of Sir Thomas Abney, who received him into his house; where, with a constancy of friendship and uniformity of conduct not often to be found, he was treated for thirty-fix years with all the kindness that friendship could prompt, and all the attention that respect could dictate. Sir Thomas died about eight years afterwards; but he continued with the lady and her daughters to the end of his life. The lady died about a year after him.

A coalition like this, a state in which the notions of patronage and dependence were overpowered by the perception of reciprocal benefits, deferves a particular memorial; and I will not withhold from the reader Dr Gibbons's reprefentation, to which regard is to be paid as to the narrative of one who writes what he knows, and what is known likewise to mul-

titudes besides.

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"Our next observation shall be made upon that "remarkably kind Providence which brought the " Doctor into Sir Thomas Abney's family, and conti-" nued him there till his death, a period of no less " than thirty-fix years. In the midst of his facred

" labours .

" facred labours for the glory of God, and good of " his generation, he is feized with a most violent and of threatening fever, which leaves him oppressed with " great weakness, and puts a stop at least to his public " fervices for four years. In this diffreffing feafon, doubly fo to his active and pious spirit, he is invited " to Sir Thomas Abney's family, nor ever removes " from it till he had finished his days. Here he en-" joyed the uninterrupted demonstrations of the truest " friendship. Here, without any care of his own, he " had every thing which could contribute to the en-" joyment of life, and favour the unwearied pursuits of his studies. Here he dwelt in a family, which, " for piety, order, harmony, and every virtue, was an "house of God. Here he had the privilege of a country recess, the fragrant bower, the spreading " lawn, the flowery garden, and other advantages, to of footh his mind and aid his restoration to health; to of yield him, whenever he chofe them, most grateful "intervals from his laborious studies, and enable him "to return to them with redoubled vigour and de-" light. Had it not been for this most happy event, " he might, as to outward view, have feebly, it may " be painfully, dragged on through many more years " of langour, and inability for public fervice, and even " for profitable study, or perhaps might have sunk " into his grave under the overwhelming load of infirmities in the midst of his days; and thus the "church and world would have been deprived of " those many excellent fermons and works, which he "drew up and published during his long residence in " this family. In a few years after his coming hither, "Sir Thomas Abney dies; but his amiable confort " furvives, who shews the Doctor the same respect "and friendship as before, and most happily for him " and great numbers besides; for, as her riches were " great, her generofity and munificence were in full " proportion; her thread of life was drawn out to

"a great age, even beyond that of the Doctor's; and thus this excellent man, through her kindness, and that of her daughter, the present Mrs Elizabeth Abney, who in a like degree esteemed and honoured him, enjoyed all the benefits and felicities he experienced at his first entrance into this family, till his days were numbered and finished, and, like a shock of corn in its season, he ascended into the regions of perfect and immortal life and joy."

If this quotation has appeared long, let it be confidered that it comprises an account of fix-and-thirty

years, and those the years of Dr Watts.

From the time of his reception into this family, his life was no otherwise diversified than by successive publications. The series of his works I am not able to deduce; their number, and their variety, shew the intensenses of his industry, and the extent of his ca-

pacity.

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He was one of the first authors that taught the Dissenters to court attention by the graces of language. Whatever they had among them before, whether of learning or acuteness, was commonly obscured and blunted by coarseness and inelegance of style. He shewed them, that zeal and purity might be expressed

and enforced by polished diction.

He continued to the end of his life the teacher of a congregation, and no reader of his works can doubt his fidelity or diligence. In the pulpit, though his low stature, which very little exceeded five feet, graced him with no advantages of appearance, yet the gravity and propriety of his utterance made his discourses very efficacious. I once mentioned the reputation which Mr Foster had gained by his proper delivery to my friend Dr Hawkesworth, who told me, that in the art of pronunciation he was far inferior to Dr Watts.

Such was his flow of thoughts, and fuch his promptitude of language, that in the latter part of his life

he did not precompose his cursory sermons; but having adjusted the heads, and sketched out some particulars, trusted for success to his extemporary powers.

He did not endeavour to affift his eloquence by any gesticulations; for, as no corporeal actions have any correspondence with theological truth, he did not see how they could enforce it.

At the conclusion of weighty sentences he gave time, by a short pause, for the proper impression.

To flated and public inftruction he added familiar vifits and personal application, and was careful to improve the opportunities which conversation offered of diffusing and increasing the influence of religion.

By his natural temper he was quick of refentment; but, by his established and habitual practice, he was gentle, modest, and inoffensive. His tenderness appeared in his attention to children, and to the poor. To the poor, while he lived in the family of his friend, he allowed the third part of his annual revenue, though the whole was not a hundred a year; and for children, he condescended to lay aside the scholar, the philosopher, and the wit, to write little poems of devotion, and systems of instruction, adapted to their wants and capacities, from the dawn of reason through its gradations of advance in the morn-Every man, acquainted with the coming of life. mon principles of human action, will look with veneration on the writer who is at one time combating Locke, and at another making a catechism for children in their fourth year. A voluntary descent from the dignity of science is perhaps the hardest lesson that humility can teach.

As his mind was capacious, his curiofity excursive, and his industry continual, his writings are very numerous, and his subjects various. With his theological works I am only enough acquainted to admire his meekness of opposition, and his mildness of cen-

fure.

fure. It was not only in his book but in his mind

that orthodoxy was united with charity.

Of his philosophical pieces, his Logic has been received into the universities, and therefore wants no private recommendation: if he owes part of it to Le Clerc, it must be considered that no man who undertakes merely to methodise or illustrate a system, pretends to be its author.

In his metaphysical disquisitions, it was observed by the late learned Mr Dyer, that he confounded the idea of space with that of empty space, and did not consider that though space might be without matter, yet matter being extended, could not be without space.

Few books have been perused by me with greater pleasure than his Improvement of the Mind, of which the radical principles may indeed be found in Locke's Conduct of the Understanding, but they are so expanded and ramissed by Watts, as to confer upon him the merit of a work in the highest degree useful and pleasing. Whoever has the care of instructing others, may be charged with deficience in his duty if this book is not recommended.

I have mentioned his treatifes of Theology as diffinct from his other productions; but the truth is, that whatever he took in hand was, by his inceffant folicitude for fouls, converted to Theology. As piety predominated in his mind, it is diffused over his works: under his direction it may be truly said, Theologia Philosophia ancillatur, philosophy is subservient to evangelical instruction; it is difficult to read a page without learning, or at least wishing, to be better. The attention is caught by indirect instruction, and he that sat down only to reason is on a sudden compelled to pray.

It was therefore with great propriety that, in 1728, he received from Edinburgh and Aberdeen an unfolicited diploma, by which he became a Doctor of Di-

vinity.

vinity. Academical honours would have more value, if they were always bestowed with equal judgment.

He continued many years to study and to preach, and to do good by his instruction and example; till at last the infirmities of age disabled him from the more laborious part of his ministerial functions, and, being no longer capable of public duty, he offered to remit the salary appendant to it; but his congregation would not accept the resignation.

By degrees his weakness increased, and at last confined him to his chamber and his bed; where he was worn gradually away without pain, till he expired. Nov. 25, 1748, in the seventy-fifth year of his age.

Few men have left behind fuch purity of character, or fuch monuments of laborious piety. He has provided inftruction for all ages, from those who are lisping their first lessons, to the enlightened readers of Malbranche and Locke; he has lest neither corporeal nor spiritual nature unexamined; he has taught the art of reasoning, and the science of the stars.

His character, therefore, must be formed from the multiplicity and diversity of his attanments, rather than from any single performance; for it would not be fafe to claim for him the highest rank in any single denomination of literary dignity; yet perhaps there was nothing in which he would not have excelled, if he had not divided his powers to different pursuits.

As a poet, had he been only a poet, he would probably have stood high among the authors with whom he is now associated. For his judgment was exact, and he noted beauties and faults with very nice discernment; his imagination, as the Dacian Battle proves, was vigorous and active, and the stores of knowledge were large by which his fancy was to befupplied. His ear was well tuned, and his diction was elegant and copious. But his devotional poetry is, like that of others, unsatisfactory. The paucity of its topics enforces perpetual repetition, and the fancdiction. It is sufficient for Watts to have done better than others what no man has done well.

His poems on other subjects seldom rise higher than might be expected from the amusements of a Man of Letters, and have different degrees of value as they are more or less laboured, or as the occasion was more or less favourable to invention.

He writes too often without regular measures, and too often in blank verse; the rhymes are not always sufficiently correspondent. He is particularly unhappy in coining names expressive of characters. His lines are commonly smooth and easy, and his thoughts always religiously pure; but who is there that, to so much piety and innocence, does not wish for a greater measure of spriteliness and vigour? He is at least one of the sew poets with whom youth and ignorance may be safely pleased; and happy will be that reader whose mind is disposed by his verses, or his prose, to imitate him in all but his non-conformity, to copy his benevolence to man, and his reverence to God.

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OF the birth or early part of the life of AM-BROSE PHILIPS I have not been able to find any account. His academical education he received at St John's College in Cambridge, where he first so licited the notice of the world by some English verses, in the Collection published by the University on the death of queen Mary.

From this time how he was employed, or in what flation he passed his life, is not yet discovered. He must have published his Pastorals before the year 1708, because they are evidently prior to those of Pope.

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He afterwards (1709) addressed to the universal patron, the duke of Dorset, a poetical Letter from Copenhagen, which was published in the Tatler, and is by Pope in one of his first Letters mentioned with high praise, as the production of a man who could write very nobly.

Philips was a zealous Whig, and therefore easily found access to Addison and Steele; but his ardour seems not to have procured him any thing more than kind words; since he was reduced to translate the Persian Tales for Tonson, for which he was afterwards reproached, with this addition of contempt, that he worked

worked for half-a-crown. The book is divided into many fections, for each of which if he received halfa-crown, his reward, as writers then were paid, was very liberal; but half-a-crown had a mean found.

He was employed in promoting the principles of his party, by epitomising Hacket's Life of Archbishop Williams. The original book is written with such depravity of genius, such mixture of the sop and pedant, as has not often appeared. The Epitome is free enough from affectation, but has little spirit or

vigour.

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In 1712 he brought upon the stage The Distrest Mother, almost a translation of Racine's Andromaque. Such a work requires no uncommon powers; but the friends of Philips exerted every art to promote his interest. Before the appearance of the play a whole Spectator, none indeed of the best, was devoted to its praise; while it yet continued to be acted, another Spectator was written, to tell what impression it made upon Sir Roger; and on the first night a select audience, says Pope *, was called together to applaud it.

It was concluded with the most successful Epilogue that was ever yet spoken on the English theatre. The three first nights it was recited twice; and not only continued to be demanded through the run, as it is termed, of the play, but whenever it is recalled to the stage, where by peculiar fortune, though a copy from the French, it yet keeps its place, the Epi-

logue is still expected, and is still spoken.

The propriety of epilogues in general, and confequently of this, was questioned by a correspondent of the Spectator, whose Letter was undoubtedly admitted for the sake of the Answer, which soon followed, written with much zeal and acrimony. The attack and the defence equally contributed to stimulate curiosity and continue attention. It may be discovered in

^{*} Spence.

the defence, that Prior's Epilogue to Phadra had a little excited jealoufy; and fomething of Prior's plan may be discovered in the performance of his rival.

Of this diftinguished Epilogue the reputed author was the wretched Budgel, whom Addison used to denominate * the man who calls me cousin; and when he was asked how such a filly fellow could write so well, replied, The Epilogue was quite another thing when I saw it first. It was known in Tonson's family, and told to Garrick, that Addison was himself the author of it, and that when it had been at first printed with his name, he came early in the morning, before the copies were distributed, and ordered it to be given to Budgel, that it might add weight to the solicitation which he was then making for a place.

Philips was now high in the ranks of literature. His play was applied to this translations from Sappho had been published in the Spectator; he was an important and diffinguished affociate of clubs witty and political; and nothing was wanting to his happiness, but that he should be sure of its continuance.

The work which had procured him the first notice from the public was his fix Pastorals which, flattering the imagination with Arcadian scenes, probably found many readers, and might have long passed as a pleafing amusement, had they not been unhappily too much commended.

The rustic Poems of Theocritus were so highly valued by the Greeks and Romans, that they attracted the imitation of Virgil, whose Eclogues seem to have been considered as precluding all attempts of the same kind; for no shepherds were taught to sing by any succeeding poet, till Nemesian and Calphurnius ventured their seeble efforts in the lower age of Latin literature.

At the revival of learning in Italy, it was foon dif-

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covered that a dialogue of imaginary swains might be composed with little difficulty; because the conversation of shepherds excludes profound or refined sentiment; and, for images and descriptions, Satyrs and Fauns, and Naiads and Dryads, were always within call; and woods and meadows, and hills and rivers, supplied variety of matter; which, having a natural power to sooth the mind, did not quickly cloy it.

Petrarch entertained the learned men of his age with the novelty of modern Pastorals in Latin. Being not ignorant of Greek, and finding nothing in the word Ecloque of rural meaning, he supposed it to be corrupted by the copiers, and therefore called his own productions Æglogues, by which he meant to express the talk of goatherds, though it will mean only the talk of goats. This new name was adopted by subsequent writers, and amongst others by our Spenser.

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More than a century afterwards (1498), Mantuan published his Bucolicks with fuch success, that they were soon dignified by Badius with a comment, and, as Scaliger complained, received into schools, and taught as classical; his complaint was vain, and the practice, however injudicious, spread far and continued long. Mantuan was read, at least in some of the inferior schools of this kingdom, to the beginning of the present century. The speakers of Mantuan carried their disquisitions beyond the country, to censure the corruptions of the Church; and from him Spenser learned to employ his swains on topics of controversy.

The Italians foon transferred Pastoral Poetry into their own language: Sannazaro wrote Arcadia in prose and verse; Tasso and Guarini wrote Favole Boschareccie, or Sylvan Dramas; and all nations of Europe filled volumes with Thyrsis and Damon, and Thestylis and Payllis.

Philips thinks it "fomewhat strange to conceive how, in an age so addicted to the Muses, Pastoral Vol. IV. P. Poetry

"Poetry never comes to be so much as thought up"on." His wonder seems very unseasonable; there had never, from the time of Spenser, wanted writers to talk occasionally of Arcadia and Strepton; and half the book, in which he first tried his powers, consists of Dialogues on queen Mary's death, between Tityrus and Corydon, or Mopfus and Menalcas. A series or book of Pastorals however, I know not that any one had then lately published.

Not long afterwards Pope made the first display of his powers in four Pastorals, written in a very different form. Philips had taken Spenser, and Pope took Virgil for his pattern. Philips endeavoured to be na-

tural, Pope laboured to be elegant.

Philips was now favoured by Addison, and by Addison's companions, who were very willing to push him into reputation. The Guardian gave an account of Pastoral, partly critical, and partly historical; in which, when the merit of the moderns is compared, Tasso and Guarini are censured for remote thoughts and unnatural refinements; and, upon the whole, the Italians and French are all excluded from rural poetry, and the pipe of the Pastoral Muse is transmitted by lawful inheritance from Theocritus to Virgil, from Virgil to Spenser, and from Spenser to Philips.

was not much delighted; he therefore drew a comparison of Philips's performance with his own, in which, with an unexampled and unequalled artifice of irony, though he has himself always the advantage, he gives the preference to Philips. The design of aggrandising himself he disguised with such dexterity, that, though Addison discovered it, Steele was deceived, and was afraid of displeasing Pope by publishing his paper. Published however it was (Guard. 40), and from that time Pope and Philips lived in a perpention.

tual reciprocation of malevolence.

In poetical powers, of either praise or satire, there was no proportion between the combatants; but Philips, though he could not prevail by wit, hoped to hurt Pope with another weapon, and charged him, as Pope thought, with Addison's approbation, as dif-

affected to the government.

Even with this he was not fatisfied; for, indeed, there is no appearance that any regard was paid to his clamours. He proceeded to groffer infults, and hung up a rod at Button's, with which he threatened to chaftise Pope, who appears to have been extremely exasperated; for in the first edition of his Letters he calls Philips r. scal, and in the last still charges him with detaining in his hands the subscriptions for Homer delivered to him by the Hanover Club.

I suppose it was never suspected that he meant to appropriate the money; he only delayed, and with sufficient meanness, the gratification of him by whose

prosperity he was pained.

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Men fometimes suffer by injudicious kindness; Philips became ridiculous, without his own fault, by the absurd admiration of his friends, who decorated him with honorary garlands which the first breath of contradiction blasted.

When upon the succession of the House of Hanover every Whig expected to be happy, Philips seems to have obtained too little notice; he caught sew drops of the golden shower, though he did not omit what slattery could perform. He was only made a Commissioner of the Lottery, (1717), and, what did not much elevate his character, a Justice of the Peace.

The fuccess of his first play must naturally dispose him to turn his hopes towards the stage: he did not however soon commit himself to the mercy of an audience, but contented himself with the same already acquired, till after nine years he produced (1721) The Briton, a tragedy which, whatever was its reception, is now neglected; though one of the scenes, be-

P 2

tween Vanoc the British Prince and Valens the Roman General, is confessed to be written with great drama-

tic skill, animated by spirit truly poetical.

He had not been idle though he had been filent; for he exhibited another tragedy the fame year, on the story of Humphry Duke of Gloucester. This tragedy

is only remembered by its title.

His happiest undertaking was of a paper called The Freethinker, in conjunction with affociates, of whom one was Dr Boulter, who, then only minister of a parish in Southwark, was of so much consequence to the government, that he was made first bishop of Bristol, and afterwards primate of Ireland, where his piety and his charity will be long honoured.

It may eafily be imagined that what was printed under the direction of Boulter, would have nothing in it indecent or licentious; its title is to be understood as implying only freedom from unreasonable prejudice. It has been reprinted in volumes, but is little read; nor can impartial criticism recommend it as

worthy of revival.

Boulter was not well qualified to write diurnal effays; but he knew how to practife the liberality of greatness and the fidelity of friendship. When he was advanced to the height of ecclefiaftical dignity, he did not forget the companion of his labours. Knowing Philips to be flenderly supported, he took him to Ireland, as partaker of his fortune; and, making him his fecretary, added fuch preferments, as enabled him to represent the county of Armagh in the Irish Parliament.

In December 1726 he was made fecretary to the Lord Chancellor; and in August 1733 became judge

of the Prerogative Court.

After the death of his patron he continued fome years in Ireland; but at last longing, as it seems, for his native country, he returned (1748) to London, having doubtless survived most of his friends and ene-

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mies, and among them his dreaded antagonist Pope-He found however the duke of Newcastle still living, and to him he dedicated his poems collected into a volume.

Having purchased an annuity of sour hundred pounds, he now certainly hoped to pass some years of life in plenty and tranquillity; but his hope deceived him: he was struck with a palfy, and died June

18, 1749, in his feventy-eighth year.

Of his personal character all that I have heard is, that he was eminent for bravery and skill in the sword, and that in conversation he was solemn and pompous. He had great sensibility of censure, if judgment may be made by a single story which I heard long ago from Mr Ing, a gentleman of great eminence in Staffordshire. "Philips," said he, "was once at table, when I asked him, How came thy king of Epirus to drive oxen, and to say I'm goaded on by love? After which

" question he never spoke again."

Of the Distrest Mother not much is pretended to be his own, and therefore it is no subject of criticism: his other two tragedies, I believe, are not below mediocrity, nor above it. Among the Poems comprised in the late collection, the Letter from Denmark may be justly praised; the Pastorals, which by the writer of the Guardian were ranked as one of the four genuine productions of the rustic Muse, cannot surely be despicable. That they exhibit a mode of life which does not exist, nor ever existed, is not to be objected; the supposition of such a state is allowed to Pastoral, In his other poems he cannot be denied the praise of lines fometimes elegant; but he has feldom much force, or much comprehension. The pieces that please best are those which, from Pope and Pope's adherents, procured him the name of Namby Pamby. the poems of short lines, by which he paid his court to all ages and characters, from Walpole the fleerer of the realm, to miss Pulteney in the nursery. The P 3 numbers

numbers, are smooth and spritely, and the diction is seldom faulty. They are not loaded with much thought, yet if they had been written by Addison they would have had admirers: little things are not valued but when they are done by those who cannot do greater.

In his translations from Pindar he found the art of reaching all the obscurity of the Theban bard, however he may fall below his sublimity; he will be allowed, if he has less fire, to have more smoke.

He has added nothing to English poetry, yet at least half his book deserves to be read: perhaps he valued most himself that part, which the critic would reject.

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GILBERT WEST is one of the writers of whom I regret my inability to give a fufficient account; the intelligence which my enquiries have obtained is

general and fcanty.

He was the son of the reverend Dr West; perhaps him who published Pindar at Oxford about the beginning of this century. His mother was fister to Sir R chard Temple, afterwards lord Cobham. His father, purposing to educate him for the Church, sent him first to Eton, and afterwards to Oxford; but he was seduced to a more airy mode of life, by a commission in a troop of horse procured him by his uncle

He continued some time in the army; though it is reasonable to suppose that he never sunk into a mere soldier, nor ever lost the love or much neglected the pursuit of learning; and afterwards, finding himself more inclined to civil employment, he laid down his commission, and engaged in business under the lord Townshend, then secretary of state, with whom he attended the king to Hanover.

His adherence to lord Townshend ended in nothing but a nomination (May 1729) to be clerk-extraordinary. of the Privy Council, which produced no immediate

profit;

profit; for it only placed him in a state of expectation and right of succession, and it was very long before

a vacancy admitted him to profit.

Soon afterwards he married, and fettled himfelf in a very pleafant house at Wickham in Kent, where he devoted himself to learning, and to piety. Of his learning the late Collection exhibits evidence, which would have been yet fuller if the differtations which accompany his version of Pindar had not been improperly omtted. Of his piety the influence has, I hope, been extended far by his Observations on the Resurrection, published in 1747, for which the University of Oxford created him a Doctor of Laws by diploma (March 30, 1748), and would doubtless have reached yet further had he lived to complete what he had for some time meditated, the Evidences of the Truth of the New Testament. Perhaps it may not be without effect to tell, that he read the prayers of the public liturgy every morning to his family, and that on Sunday evening he called his fervants into the parlour, and read to them first a sermon, and then prayers. Crashaw is now not the only maker of verses to whom may be given the two venerable names of Poet and Saint.

He was very often visited by Lyttelton and Pitt, who, when they were weary of faction and debates, used at Wickham to find books and quiet, a decent table, and literary conversation. There is at Wickham a walk made by Pitt; and, what is of far more importance, at Wickham Lyttelton received that conviction which produced his Differtation on St Paul.

These two illustrious friends had for a while listened to the blandishments of insidelity, and when West's book was published, it was bought by some who did not know his change of opinion, in expectation of new objections against Christianity; and as Insidels do not want malignity, they revenged the disappointment by calling him a Methodist.

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Mr West's income was not large; and his friends endeavoured, but without success, to obtain an augmentation. It is reported, that the education of the young prince was offered to him, but that he required a more extensive power of superintendence than it was thought proper to allow him.

In time, however, his revenue was improved; he lived to have one of the lucrative clerkships of the Privy Council (1752), and Mr Pitt at last had it in his power to make him treasurer of Chelsea Hospital.

He was now sufficiently rich; but wealth came too late to be long enjoyed: nor could it secure him from the calamities of life; he lost (1755) his only son; and the year after (March 26), a stroke of the palfy brought to the grave one of the sew poets to

whom the grave might be without its terrors.

Of his translations I have only compared the first Olympic Ode with the original, and found my expectation surpassed, both by its elegance and its exactness. He does not confine himself to his author's train of stanzas; for he saw that the difference of the languages required a different mode of vertification. The first strophe is eminently happy; in the second he has a little strayed from Pindar's meaning, who says, If thou, my soul, wishest to speak of games, look not in the defert sky for a planet hotter than the sun, nor shall we tell of nobler games than those of Olympia. He is sometimes too paraphrastical. Pindar bestows upon Hiero an epithet, which, in one word, signifies delighting in horses; a word which, in the translation, generates these lines:

Hiero's royal brows, whose care
Tends the courser's noble breed,
Pleas'd to nurse the pregnant mare,
Pleas'd to train the youthful steed.

Pindar fays of Pelops, that he came alone in the dark to the White Sea; and West,

Near the billow-beaten fide Of the foam-befilver'd main, Darkling, and alone, he ftood:

Which however is less exuberant than the former

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paffage.

A work of this kind must, in a minute examination, discover many imperfections; but West's version, so far as I have considered it, appears to be the

product of great labour and great abilities.

His Institution of the Garter (1742), is written with fufficient knowledge of the manners that prevailed in the age to which it is referred, and with great elegance of diction; but, for want of a process of events, neither knowledge nor elegance preserve the reader from weariness.

His Imitations of Spenfer are very fuccessfully performed, both with respect to the metre, the language, and the fiction; and being engaged at once by the excellence of the fentiments, and the artifice of the copy, the mind has two amusements together. But fuch compositions are not to be reckoned among the great atchievements of intellect, because their effect is local and temporary; they appeal not to reason or paffion, but to memory, and presuppose an accidental or artificial state of mind. An Imitation of Spenier is nothing to a reader, however acute, by whom Spenfer has never been perused. Works of this kind may deserve praise, as proofs of great industry, and great nicety of observation; but the highest praise, the praife of genius, they cannot claim. The noblest beauties of art are those of which the effect is co-extended with rational nature, or at least with the whole circle of polished life; what is less than this can be only

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THERE is in the Adventurer a paper of verses given to one of the authors as Mr West's, and supposed to have been written by him. It should not be concealed, however, that it is printed with Mr Jago's name in Dodfley's Collection, and is mentioned as his in a Letter of Shenstone's. Perhaps West gave it without naming the author; and Hawkesworth, receiving it from him, thought it his; for his he thought it, as he told me, and as he tells the public.

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COLLINS.

pearance, was decent and many a line translation can

WILLIAM COLLINS was born at Chichester on the twenty-fifth of December, about 1720. His father was a hatter, of good reputation. He was in 1733, as Dr Warton has kindly informed me, admitted scholar of Winchester College, where he was educated by Dr Burton. His English exercises were better than his Latin.

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He first courted the notice of the public by some verses to a Lady weeping, published in The Gentlemun's

Magazine.

In 1740, he stood first in the list of the scholars to be received in succession at New College; but unhappily there was no vacancy. This was the original misfortune of his life. He became a Commoner of Queen's College, probably with a scanty maintenance; but was in about half a year elected a Demy of Magdalen College, where he continued till he had taken a Bachelor's degree, and then suddenly left the University; for what reason I know not that he told.

He now (about 1744) came to London a literary adventurer, with many projects in his head, and very little money in his pocket. He defigned many works; but his great fault was irrefolution, or the frequent

calls of immediate necessity broke his schemes, and suffered him to pursue no settled purpose. A man, doubtful of his dinner, or trembling at a creditor, is not much disposed to abstracted meditation, or remote enquiries. He published proposals for a History of the Revival of Learning; and I have heard him speak with great kindness of Leo the Tenth, and with keen resentment of his tasteless successor. But probably not a page of the History was ever written. He planned several tragedies, but he only planned them. He wrote now-and-then odes and other poems, and

did fomething, however little.

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About this time I fell into his company. His appearance was decent and manly; his knowledge confiderable, his views extensive, his conversation elegant, and his disposition chearful. By degrees I gained his confidence; and one day was admitted to him when he was immured by a bailiff, that was prowling in the ftreet. On this occasion recourse was had to the bookfellers, who, on the credit of a translation of Aristotle's Poetics, which he engaged to write with a large commentary, advanced as much money as enabled him to escape into the country. He shewed me the guineas fafe in his hand. Soon afterwards his uncle, Mr Martin, a lieutenant-colonel, left him about two thousand pounds; a fum which Collins could scarcely think exhaustible, and which he did not live to ex-The guineas were then repaid, and the translation neglected.

But man is not born for happiness; Collins, who, while he fludied to live, felt no evil but poverty, no sooner lived to study than his life was assailed by more

dreadful calamities, disease and infanity.

Having formerly written his character, while perhaps it was yet more distinctly impressed upon my memory, I shall insert it here.

"Mr Collins was a man of extensive literature, and Vol. IV. Q of

with the learned tongues, but with the Italian, French, and Spanish languages. He had employed his mind chiefly upon works of fiction, and subjects of fancy; and, by indulging some peculiar habits of thought, was eminently delighted with those flights of imagination which pass the bounds of nature, and to which the mind is reconciled only by a passive acquiescence in popular traditions. He loved fairies, genii, giants, and monsters; he delighted to rove through the meanders of inchantment, to gaze on the magnificence of golden palaces, to repose by the water-falls of Ely-

fian gardens.

"This was however the character rather of his inclination than his genius; the grandeur of wildness, and the novelty of extravagance, were always defired by him, but were not always attained. Yet as diligence is never wholly lost; if his efforts fometimes caused harshness and obscurity, they likewise produced in happier moments sublimity and splendour. This idea which he had formed of excellence, led him to oriental sictions and allegorical imagery; and perhaps, while he was intent upon description, he did not sufficiently cultivate sentiment. His poems are the productions of a mind not describe in fire, nor unfurnished with knowledge either of books or life, but somewhat obstructed in its progress by deviation in quest of mistaken beauties.

"His morals were pure, and his opinions pious: in a long continuance of poverty, and long habits of diffipation, it cannot be expected that any character should be exactly uniform. There is a degree of want by which the freedom of agency is almost destroyed; and long affociation with fortuitous companions will at last relax the strictness of truth, and abate the fervour of sincerity. That this man, wife and virtuous as he was, passed always unentangled through the

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fnares of life, it would be prejudice and temerity to affirm; but it may be faid that at least he preserved the source of action unpolluted, that his principles were never shaken, that his distinctions of right and wrong were never confounded, and that his faults had nothing of malignity or design, but proceeded from some unexpected pressure, or casual temptation.

"The latter part of his life cannot be remembered but with pity and fadness. He languished some years under that depression of mind which enchains the faculties without destroying them, and leaves reason the knowledge of right without the power of pursuing it. These clouds which he perceived gathering on his intellects, he endeavoured to disperse by travel, and passed into France; but sound himself constrained to yield to his malady, and returned. He was for some time consined in a house of lunatics, and afterwards retired to the care of his sister in Chichester, where death in 1756 came to his relief.

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"After his return from France, the writer of this character paid him a visit at Islington, where he was waiting for his sister, whom he had directed to meet him: there was then nothing of disorder discernable in his mind by any but himself; but he had withdrawn from study, and travelled with no other book than an English Testament, such as children carry to the school: when his friend took it into his hand, out of curiosity to see what companion a Man of Letters had chosen, I have but one book, said Collins, but that is the best."

Such was the fate of Collins, with whom I once delighted to converse, and whom I yet remember with tenderness.

He was visited at Chichester, in his last illness, by his learned friends Dr Warton and his brother; to whom he spoke with disapprobation of his Oriental Eclogues, as not sufficiently expressive of Asiatic man-

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ners, and called them his Irish Eclogues. He shewed them, at the same time, an ode inscribed to Mr John Hume, on the superstitions of the Highlands; which they thought superior to his other works, but which no search has yet found.

His diforder was not alienation of mind, but general laxity and feeblenefs, a deficiency rather of his vital than intellectual powers. What he spoke wanted neither judgment nor spirit; but a few minutes exhausted him, so that he was forced to rest upon the couch, till a short cessation restored his powers, and he was again able to talk with his former vigour.

The approaches of this dreadful malady he began to feel foon after his uncle's death; and, with the usual weakness of men so diseased, eagerly snatched that temporary relief with which the table and the bottle flatter and seduce. But his health continually declined, and he grew more and more burthensome to himself.

To what I have formerly faid of his writings may be added, that his diction was often harsh, unskilfully laboured, and injudiciously selected. He affected the obsolete when it was not worthy of revival; and he puts his words out of the common order, seeming to think, with some later candidates for fame, that not to write prose is certainly to write poetry. His lines commonly are of slow motion, clogged and impeded with clusters of consonants. As men are often esteemed who cannot be loved, so the poetry of Collins may sometimes extort praise when it gives little pleasure.

Mr Collins's first production is added here from the

Poetical Calendar;

them, at the fame time, an one interest to Mr John TO MISS AURELIA C__R, chought (eperior to his or or works, but which

ON HER WELPING AT HER SISTER'S WEDDING.

this deforder was not alienation of mind, but gene-Cease, fair Aurelia, cease to mourn; Lament not Hannah's happy state; You may be happy in your turn, And seize the treasure you regret.

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With Love united Hymen stands, And foftly whifpers to your charms; "Meet but your lover in my bands,
"You'll find your fifter in his arms." that temporary relief with which the table and the

notels thatter and feduce. Use his health continually

declined, and he arew more and more burthenfome to

To what I have formerly faid of his writings may be added, the the diction was often haifn, untkillfully tablemed rand injudicionaly (cledred). He affected the

obfinere when it was not worthy of reviyal; and he with his words, our of the common order, from its think will forme let a condidates for famo, that not exemple and a vertexal of white speaking the little

commonly live of flow motion, closged and impeded with classes of confundition As men are often electraed who cannot be love if to the openior of Cathins may the second course when it gives little pleafure. Mart alline's treet ared action to added here from the

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dation der Artife Course

if whote grand mother," for her if was a Stakeneare, it delected a from a brother of every body's Stake. It founds to be had a four and three.

JOHN DYER, of whom I have no other account to give than his own Letters, published with Hughes's correspondence, and the notes added by the editor, have afforded me, was born in 1700, the second son of Robert Dyer of Aberglasney, in Caermarthenshire, a solicitor of great capacity and note.

He passed through Westminster-school under the care of Dr Freind, and was then called home to be instructed in his father's profession. But his father died soon, and he took no delight in the study of the law, but, having always amused himself with drawing, resolved to turn painter, and became pupil to Mr Richardson, an artist then of high reputation, but now better known by his books than by his pictures.

Having studied awhile under his master, he became, as he tells his friend, an itinerant painter, and wandered about South Wales and the parts adjacent; but he mingled poetry with painting, and about 1727 printed Grongar Hill, in Lewis's Miscellany.

Being, probably, unfatisfied with his own proficiency, he, like other painters, travelled to Italy; and coming back in 1740, published the Ruins of Rome. fi

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If his poem was written foon after his return, he did not make much use of his acquisitions in painting, whatever they might be; for decline of health, and love of study, determined him to the church. He therefore entered into orders; and, it seems, married about the same time a lady of the name of Ensor; whose grand-mother," says he, "was a Shakspeare, descended from a brother of every body's Shakfeare;" by her, in 1756, he had a son and three daughters living.

His ecclefiaftical provision was a long time but slender. His first patron, Mr Harper, gave him, in 1741, Calthorp in Leicestershire of eighty pounds a year, on which he lived ten years, and then exchanged it for Belchford in Lincolnshire of seventy-sive. His condition now began to mend. In 1751, Sir John Heathcote gave him Coningsby, of one hundred and forty pounds a year; and in 1755 the Chancellor added Kirkby, of one hundred and ten. He complains that the repair of the house at Coningsby, and other expences, took away the profit.

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In 1757 he published the Fleece, his greatest poetical work; of which I will not suppress a ludicrous story. Dodsley the bookseller was one day mentioning it to a critical visitor, with more expectation of success than the other could easily admit. In the conversation the author's age was asked; and being represented as advanced in life, He will, said the critic, be buried in woollen.

He did not indeed long furvive that publication, nor long enjoy the increase of his preferments; for in 1758 he died.

Dyer is not a poet of bulk or dignity sufficient to require an elaborate criticism. Grongar Hill is the happiest of his productions: it is not indeed very accurately written; but the scenes which it displays are so pleasing, the images which they raise so welcome to the mind, and the restections of the writer so conformant

fonant to the general fense or experience of mankind,

that when it is once read, it will be read again

The idea of the Ruins of Rome strikes more but pleases less, and the title raises greater expectation than the performance gratises. Some passages, however, are conceived with the mind of a poet; as when, in the neighbourhood of dilapidating Edifices, he says,

The hermit oft, 'midst his orisons, hears, Aghast, the voice of Time disparting towers.

Of The Fleece, which never became popular, and is now univerfally neglected, I can fay little that is likely to recal it to attention. The woolcomber and the poet appear to me fuch difcordant natures, that an attempt to bring them together is to couple the ferbent with the fowl. When Dyer, whose mind was not unpoetical, has done his utmost, by interesting his reader in our native commodity, by interfperfing rural imagery, and incidental digreffions, by clothing fmall images in great words, and by all the writer's arts of delufion, the meanness naturally adhering, and the irreverence habitually annexed to trade and manufacture, fink him under insuperable oppression; and the difgust which blank verse, encumbering and encumbered, superadds to an unpleasing subject, foon repels the reader, however willing to be pleafed.

Let me however honestly report whatever may counterbalance this weight of censure. I have been told that Akenside, who, upon a poetical question, has a right to be heard, said, "That he would regulate his opinion of the reigning taste by the sate of Dyer's Fleece; for, if that were ill received, he should not think it any longer reasonable to expect

fame from excellence."

SHENSTONE.

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The idea of the Raint of Rome frikes more but pleafes lefs, and the title raifes greater expedition than the performance gratifies. Some parliages, however, are conceived with the mind of a poet, as when, in the neighbourhood of dilapidating Edifices.

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SHENSTONE.

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Of The Heers, which never became popular, and is now univerfally neglested, I can lay little that is

Shenstone and Anne Pen, was born in November 1714, at the Leasowes in Hales Owen, one of those insulated districts which, in the division of the kingdom, was appended, for some reason not now discoverable, to a distant county; and which, though surrounded by Warwickshire and Worcestershire, belongs to Shropshire, though perhaps thirty miles distant from any other part of it.

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He learned to read of an old dame, whom his poem of the Schoolmistress has delivered to posterity; and soon received such delight from books, that he was always calling for fresh entertainment, and expected that when any of the family went to market a new book should be brought him, which when it came, was in fondness carried to bed and laid by him. It is said, that when his request had been neglected, his mother wrapped up a piece of wood of the same form, and pacified him for the night.

As he grew older, he went for a while to the Grammar-school in Hales-Owen, and was placed afterwards with Mr Crumpton, an eminent schoolmaster at So-

lihul,

lihul, where he diftinguished himself by the quickness.

of his progrefs.

When he was young (June 1724) he was deprived of his father, and foon after (August 1726) of his grandfather; and was, with his brother, who died afterwards unmarried, left to the care of his grand-

mother, who managed the estate.

From school he was sent in 1732 to Pembroke College in Oxford, a society which for half a century has been eminent for English poetry and elegant literature. Here it appears that he found delight and advantage; for he continued his name in the book ten years, though he took no degree. After the first four years he put on the Civilian's gown, but without shewing any intention to engage in the profession.

About the time when he went to Oxford, the death of his grandmother devolved his affairs to the care of the reverend Mr Dolman of Brome in Staffordfhire, whose attention he always mentioned with gra-

titude.

At Oxford he employed himself upon English poetry; and in 1737 published a small Miscellany, with-

out his name.

He then for a time wandered about, to acquaint himself with life; and was sometimes at London, sometimes at Bath, or any other place of public resort; but he did not forget his poetry. He published in 1740 his Judgment of Hercules, addressed to Mr Lyttleton, whose interest he supported with great warmth at an election: this was two years afterwards sollowed by the Schoolmistress.

Mr Dolman, to whose care he was indebted for his ease and leisure, died in 1745, and the care of his own fortune now fell upon him. He tried to escape it a while, and lived at his house with his tenants, who were distantly related; but, finding that impersed possession inconvenient, he took the whole estate into

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Now was excited his delight in rural pleafures, and his ambition of rural elegance: he began from this time to point his prospects, to diversify his furface, to entangle his walks, and to wind his waters; which he did with fuch judgment and fuch fancy, as made his little domain the envy of the great, and the admiration of the skilful; a place to be visited by travellers, and copied by defigners. Whether to plant a walk in undulating curves, and to place a bench at every turn where there is an object to catch the view; to make water run where it will be heard, and to ftagnate where it will be feen; to leave intervals where the eye will be pleafed, and to thicken the plantation where there is fomething to be hidden, demands any great powers of mind, I will not enquire; perhaps a fullen and furly speculator may think such performances rather the fport than the business of human reason. But it must be at least confessed, that to embellish the form of nature is an innocent amusement; and some praise must be allowed by the most fupercilious observer to him, who does best what such multitudes are contending to do well.

This praise was the praise of Shenstone; but, like all other modes of felicity, it was not enjoyed without its abatements. Lyttelton was his neighbour and his rival, whose empire, spacious and opulent, looked with disdain on the petty State that appeared behind it. For a while the inhabitants of Hagley affected to tell their acquaintance of the little fellow that was trying to make himself admired; but when by degrees the Leasowes forced themselves into notice, they took care to defeat the curiosity which they could not suppress, by conducting their visitants perversely to inconvenient points of view, and introducing them at the wrong end of a walk to detect a deception; injuries of which Shenstone would heavily complain. Where there is

emulation

emulation there will be vanity, and where there is

vanity there will be folly.

The pleasure of Shenstone was all in his eye; he valued what he valued merely for its looks; nothing raised his indignation more than to ask if there were any fishes in his water.

His house was mean, and he did not improve it; his care was of his grounds. When he came home from his walks he might find his floors flooded by a. shower through the broken roof; but could spare no

money for its reparation.

In time his expences brought clamours about him, that overpowered the lamb's bleat and the linnet's fong; and his groves were haunted by beings very different from fawns and fairies. He spent his estate in adorning it, and his death was probably hastened by his anxieties. He was a lamp that spent its oil in blazing. It is said, that if he had lived a little longer he would have been assisted by a pension: such bounty could not have been ever more properly bestowed; but that it was ever asked is not certain; it is too certain that it never was enjoyed.

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He died at the Leasowes, of a putrid fever, about five on Friday morning, February 11, 1763; and was buried by the fide of his brother in the church-yard

of Hales-Owen.

He was never married, though he might have obtained the lady, whoever she was, to whom his Pastoral Ballad was addressed. He is represented by his friend Dodssey as a man of great tenderness and generosity, kind to all that were within his influence; but, if once offended, not easily appealed; inattentive to economy, and careless of his expences; in his person larger than the middle size, with something clumsy in his form; very negligent of his clothes, and remarkable for wearing his grey hair in a particular manner; for he held that the fashion was no rule

of dress, and that every man was to fuit his appearance to his natural form.

His mind was not very comprehensive, nor his curiosity active; he had no value for those parts of knowledge which he had not himself cultivated.

His life was unstained by any crime; the Elegy on Jeffe, which has been supposed to relate an unsortunate and criminal amour of his own, was known by his friends to have been suggested by the story of Mils Godfrey in Richardson's Famela.

What Gray thought of his character, from the pe-

rufal of his Letters, was this:

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"I have read too an octavo volume of Shenstone's "Letters. Poor man! he was always wishing for money, for fame, and other distinctions: and his whole philosophy consisted in living against his will in retirement, and in a place which his taste had adorned; but which he only enjoyed when people of note came to see and commend it: his correspondence is about nothing else but this place and his own writings, with two or three neighbouring clergymen, who wrote verses too."

His poems confift of elegies, odes, and ballads, hu-

morous fallies, and moral pieces.

His conception of an Elegy he has in his Preface very judiciously and discriminately explained. It is, according to his account, the effusion of a contemplative mind, sometimes plaintive, and always serious, and therefore superior to the glitter of slight ornaments. His compositions suit not ill to this description. His topics of praise are the domestic virtues, and his thoughts are pure and simple; but, wanting combination, they want variety. The peace of solitude, the innocence of inactivity, and the unenvied security of an humble station, can fill but a few pages. That of which the effence is uniformity will be soon described. His Elegies have therefore too much resemblance of each other.

Vol. IV. R The

The lines are fometimes, such as Elegy requires, smooth and easy; but to this praise his claim is not constant: his diction is often harsh, improper, and affected; his words ill-coined, or ill-chosen, and his

phrase unskilfully inverted.

The Lyric Poems are almost all of the light and airy kind, such as trip lightly and nimbly along, without the load of any weighty meaning. From these, however, Rural Elegance has some right to be excepted. I once heard it praised by a very learned lady; and though the lines are irregular, and the thoughts diffused with too much verbosity, yet it cannot be denied to contain both philosophical argument and poetical spirit.

Of the rest I cannot think any excellent; the Skylark pleases me best, which has however more of the

epigram than of the ode.

But the four parts of his Passoral Ballad demand particular notice. I cannot but regret that it is passoral; an intelligent reader, acquainted with the scenes of real life, sickens at the mention of the crook, the pipe, the sheep, and the kids, which it is not necessary to bring forward to notice, for the poet's art is selection, and he ought to shew the beauties without the groffness of the country life. His stanza seems to have been chosen in imitation of Rowe's Despairing Shepherd.

In the first part are two passages, to which if any mind denies its sympathy, it has no acquaintance with

love or nature:

I priz'd every hour that went by,

Beyond all that had pleas'd me before;

But now they are past, and I sigh,

And I grieve that I priz'd them no more.

When forc'd the fair nymph to forego, What anguish I felt in my heart! it

Yet I thought—but it might not be fo, 'Twas with pain that she saw me depart.

She gaz'd, as I flowly withdrew;
My path I could hardly difcern;
So fweetly fhe bade me adieu,
I thought that she bade me return.

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In the fecond this passage has its prettiness, though it be not equal to the former:

I have found out a gift for my fair;
I have found where the wood-pigeons breed:
But let me that plunder forbear,
She will fay 'twas a barbarous deed:

For he ne'er could be true, she averr'd, Who could rob a poor bird of its young; And I lov'd her the more, when I heard Such tenderness fall from her tongue.

In the third he mentions the common-places of amorous poetry with some address:

'Tis his with mock passion to glow;
'Tis his in smooth tales to unfold,
How her face is as bright as the snow,
And her bosom, be sure, is as cold:

How the nightingales labour the strain, With the notes of his charmer to vie; How they vary their accents in vain, Repine at her triumphs, and die.

In the fourth I find nothing better than this natural strain of Hope:

Alas! from the day that we met,
What hope of an end to my woes?
When I cannot endure to forget
The glance that undid my repose.

Yet

Yet Time may diminish the pain: The Hower, and the shrub, and the tree, Which I rear'd for her pleasure in vain, In time may have comfort for me.

His Levities are by their title exempted from the feverities of criticism; yet it may be remarked, in a few words, that his humour is fometimes gross, and

feldom spritely.

Of the Moral Poems the first is the Choice of Hercules, from Xenophon. The numbers are smooth, the diction elegant, and the thoughts just: but something of vigour perhaps is still to be wished, which it might have had by brevity and compression. His Fate of Delicacy has an air of gaiety, but not a very pointed general moral. His blank verses, those that can read them may probably find to be like the blank verses of his neighbours. Love and Honour is derived from the old ballad, Did you not hear of a Spanish Lady-I wish it well enough to wish it were in rhyme.

The Schoolmistress, of which I know not what claim it has to fland among the Moral Works, is furely the most pleasing of Shenstone's performances. The adoption of a particular style, in light and short compolitions, contributes much to the increase of pleafure: we are entertained at once with two imitations, of nature in the fentiments, of the original author in the style, and between them the mind is kept in per-

petual employment.

The general recommendation of Shenftone is easi. nefs and fimplicity; his general defect is want of comprehension and variety. Had his mind been better flored with knowledge, whether he could have been great, I know not; he could certainly have been a-

greeable.

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YOUNG.

THE following Life was written, at my request, by a gentleman who had better information than I could easily have obtained; and the public will perhaps wish that I had solicited and obtained more such favours from him.

" DEAR SIR,

"In consequence of our different conversations about authentic materials for the Life of Young, I send you the following detail. It is not, I confess, immediately in the line of my profession; but hard indeed is our fate at the bar, if we may not call a few hours now-and-then our own.

"Of great men fomething must always be said to gratify curiosity. Of the great author of the Night Thoughts much has been told of which there never could have been proofs; and little care appears to have been taken to tell that of which proofs, with little trouble, might have been procured."

EDWARD YOUNG was born at Upham, near Winchester, in June 1681. He was the son of Edward Young, at that time Fellow of Winchester College

lege and Rector of Upham; who was the fon of To. Young of Woodhay in Berkshire, styled by Wood gentleman. In September 1682 the Poet's father was collated to the prebend of Gillingham Minor, in the church of Sarum, by bishop Ward. When Ward's faculties were impaired by age, his duties were necesfarily performed by others. We learn from Wood, that, at a visitation of Sprat, July the 12th, 1686, the Prebendary preached a Latin fermon, afterwards published, with which the Bishop was so pleased, that he told the Chapter he was concerned to find the preacher had one of the worst prebends in their church. Some time after this, in confequence of his merit and reputation, or of the interest of Lord Bradford, to whom, in 1702, he dedicated two volumes of fermons, he was appointed chaplain to King William and Queen Mary, and preferred to the deanery of Sarum. Jacob, who wrote in 1720, fays, he was chaplain and clerk of the closet to the late Queen, who honoured him by standing god mother to the His fellowship of Winchester he resigned in favour of a Mr Harris, who married his only daugh-The Dean died at Sarum, after a short illness, in 1705, in the fixty-third year of his age. On the Sunday after his deceafe Bishop Burnet preached at the cathedral, and began his fermon with faying, " Death has been of late walking round us, and ma-"king breach upon breach upon us, and has now car-" ried away the head of this body with a stroke; so " that he, whom you faw a week ago diffributing the " holy mysteries, is now laid in the dust." But he still " lives in the many excellent directions he has left us,

"both how to live and how to die."

The Dean placed his fon upon the foundation at Winchester College, where he had himself been educated. At this school Edward Young remained till the election after his eighteenth birth-day, the period at which those upon the foundation are superannuated.

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Whether he did not betray his abilities early in life, or his masters had not skill enough to discover in their pupil any marks of genius for which he merited reward, or no vacancy at Oxford afforded them an opportunity to bestow upon him the reward provided for merit by William of Wykeham; certain it is, that to an Oxford fellowship our Poet did not succeed. By chance, or by choice, New College does not number among its Fellows him who wrote the Night

Thoughts.

On the 13th of October, 1703, he was entered an Independent Member of New College, that he might live at little expence in the Warden's lodgings, who was a particular friend of his father, till he should be qualified to stand for a fellowship at All-souls. a few months the warden of New College died. then removed to Corpus College. The Prefident of this Society, from regard also for his father, invited him thither, in order to lessen his academical expences. In 1708, he was nominated to a law fellowship at All-fouls by Archbishop Tennison, into whose hands it came by devolution. - Such repeated patronage, while it justifies Burnet's praise of the father, reflects credit on the conduct of the fon. The manner in which it was exerted feems to prove that the father did not leave behind him much wealth.

On the 23d of April, 1714, Young took his degree of Bachelor of Civil Laws, and his Doctor's de-

gree on the 10th of June, 1719.

Soon after he went to Oxford, he discovered, it is faid, an inclination for pupils. Whether he ever commenced tutor is not known. None has hitherto boasted to have received his academical instruction from the author of the Night Thoughts.

It is certain that his college was proud of him no less as a scholar than as a poet; for, in 1716, when the foundation of the Codrington Library was laid, two years after he had taken his Bachelor's degree, he was appointed to speak the Latin oration. This is at least particular for being dedicated in English To the Ladies of the Codrington Family. To these Ladies he says, "that he was unavoidably flung into a singularity, by being obliged to write an epistle-dedicatory void of common-place, and such an one as was never published before by any author whatever:—that this practice absolved them from any obligation of reading what was presented to them;—and that the bookseller approved of it, because it would make people stare, was absurd enough, and perfectly right."

Of this oration there is no appearance in his own edition of his works; and prefixed to an edition by Curll and Tonson, in 1741, is a letter from Young to Curll, if Curll may be credited, dated December the 9th 1739, wherein he says he has not leisure to review what he formerly wrote, and adds, "I have not the Epistle to Lord Lansdowne. If you will take my advice, I would have you omit that, and the oration on Codrington. I think the collection will

"fell better without them."

There are who relate, that, when first Young found himself independent, and his own master at All-souls, he was not the ornament to religion and

morality which he afterwards became.

The authority of his father, indeed, had ceased fome time before by his death; and Young was certainly not ashamed to be patronized by the infamous Wharton But Wharton befriended in Young, perhaps, the poet, and particularly the tragedian. If virtuous authors must be patronized only by virtuous peers, who shall point them out?

Yet Pope is faid by Ruffhead to have told Warburton, that "Young had much of a fublime genius, though without common fense; so that his genius, having no guide, was perpetually liable to degenerate into bombast. This made him, pass a foolish youth, the sport of peers and poets; but his having a very

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good heart enabled him to support the clerical character when he assumed it, first with decency, and afterwards with honour."

They who think ill of Young's morality in the early part of his life, may perhaps be wrong; but Tindal could not err in his opinion of Young's warmth and ability in the cause of religion. Tindal used to spend much of his time at All-souls. "The other boys," said the atheist, "I can always answer, because I always know whence they have their arguments, which I have read an hundred times; but that fellow Young is continually pestering me with something of his own."

After all, Tindal and the censurers of Young may be reconcileable. Young might, for two or three years, have tried that kind of life, in which his natural principles would not suffer him to wallow long. If this were so, he has left behind him not only his evidence in favour of virtue, but the potent testimony

of experience against vice.

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We shall soon see that one of his earliest productions was more serious than what comes from the ge-

nerality of unfledged poets.

Young perhaps ascribed the good fortune of Addison to the Poem to bis Majesty, presented, with a copy of verses, to Somers; and hoped that he also might foar to wealth and honours on wings of the same kind. His first poetical slight was when Queen Anne called up to the House of Lords the sons of the Earls of Northampton and Aylesbury, and added, in one day, ten others to the number of peers. In order to reconcile the people to one at least of the new Lords, he published in 1712 An Epistle to the Right Honourable George Lord Lansdowne. In this composition the poet pours out his panegyric with the extravagance of a young man, who thinks his present stock of wealth will never be exhausted.

The poem feems intended also to reconcile the public to the late peace. This is endeavoured to be done

by shewing that men are slain in war, and that inpeace harvests wave, and commerce swells her sail. If
this be humanity, is it politics? Another purpose of
this epistle appears to have been, to prepare the public for the reception of some tragedy of his own. His
Lordship's patronage, he says, will not let him repent
his passion for the stage;—and the particular praise
bestowed on Othello and Oromoko looks as if some such
character as Zanga was even then in contemplation.
The affectionate mention of the death of his friend
Harrison of New College, at the close of this poem,
is an instance of Young's art, which displayed itself
so wonderfully some time afterwards in the Night
Thoughts, of making the public a party in his private
forrow.

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Should justice call upon you to censure this poem, it ought at least to be remembered that he did not insert it into his works; and that in the letter to Curll, as we have seen, he advises its omission. The bookfellers, in the late Body of English Poetry, should have distinguished what was deliberately rejected by the respective authors. This I shall be careful to do with regard to Young. "I think, says he, the fol-"lowing pieces in four volumes to be the most ex-"cuseable of all that I have written; and I wish less apology was needful for these. As there is no recalling what is got abroad, the pieces here republished I have revised and corrected, and rendered them as pardonable as it was in my power to do." Shall the gates of repentance be shut only against

literary finners?

When Addison published Cato in 1713, Young had the honour of prefixing to it a recommendatory copy of verses. This is one of the pieces which the author of the Night Thoughts did not republish.

On the appearance of his Poem on the Last Day, Addison did not return Young's compliment; but The Englishman of October 29, 1713, which was probably written

written by Addison, speaks handsomely of this poem. The Last Day was published soon after the peace. The vice chancellor's imprimatur, for it was first printed at Oxford, is dated May the 19th, 1713. From the Exordium Young appears to have spent some time on the composition of it. While other bards with Britain's hero fet their fouls on fire, he draws, he fays, a deeper scene. Marlborough had been confidered by Britain as her bero; but, when the Last Day was published, female cabal had blasted for a time the laurels of Blenheim. This serious poem was finished by Young as early as 1710, before he was thirty; for part of it is printed in the Tatler. It was inscribed to the Queen, in a dedication, which, for fome reason, he did not admit into his works. It tells her, that his only title to the great honour he now does himself is the obligation he formerly received from her royal indulgence.

Of this obligation nothing is now known, unless he alluded to her being his godmother. He is said indeed to have been engaged at a settled stipend as a writer for the court. In Swift's "Rhapsody on Poe-"try" are these lines, speaking of the court—

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That Y means Young, is clear from four other lines in the fame poem.

Attend, ye Popes and Youngs and Gays, And tune your harps and firew your bays; Your panegyrics here provide; You cannot err on flattery's fide. Yet who shall say with certainty that Young was a pensioner? In all modern periods of this country, have not the writers on one side been regularly called Hire-

lings, and on the other Patriots?

Of the dedication the complexion is clearly political. It speaks in the highest terms of the late peace; —it gives her Majesty praise indeed for her victories, but says, that the author is more pleased to see her rise from this lower world soaring above the clouds, passing the first and second heavens, and leaving the fixed stars behind her; —nor will he lose her there, but keep her still in view through the boundless spaces on the other side of Creation, in her journey towards eternal bliss, till he behold the heaven of heavens open, and angels receiving and conveying her still onward from the stretch of his imagination, which tires in her pursuit, and salls back again to earth.

The Queen was foon called away from this lower world, to a place where human praise or human flattery even less general than this are of little consequence. If Young thought the dedication contained only the praise of truth, he should not have omitted it in his works. Was he conscious of the exaggeration of party? Then he should not have written it. The poem itself is not without a glance to politics, notwithstanding the subject. The cry that the church was in danger, had not yet subsided. The Last Day, written by a layman, was much approved by the ministry, and their friends.

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Before the Queen's death, The Force of Reli ion, or Vanquished Love, was sent into the world. This poem is founded on the execution of Lady Jane Gray and her husband Lord Guildford in 1554—a story chosen for the subject of a tragedy by Edmund Smith, and wrought into a tragedy by Rowe. The dedication of it to the countess of Salisbury does not appear in his own edition. He hopes it may be some excuse for his

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his prefumption that the story could not have been read without thoughts of the Countess of Salisbury, though it had been dedicated to another. "To be hold," he proceeds, "a person only virtuous, stirs in us a prudent regret; to behold a person only amiable to the sight, warms us with a religious indigmation; but to turn our eyes on a Countess of Salismoury, gives us pleasure and improvement; it works a sort of miracle, occasions the biass of our nature to fall off from sin, and makes our very senses and affections converts to our religion, and promoters of our duty." His stattery was as ready for the other sex as for ours, and was at least as well adapted.

August the 27th, 1714, Pope writes to his friend Jervas, that he is just arrived from Oxford—that every one is much concerned for the Queen's death, but that no panegyrics are ready yet for the King. thing like friendship had yet taken place between Pope and Young; for, foon after the event which Pope mentions, Young published a poem on the Queen's death, and his Majesty's accession to the It is inscribed to Addison, then secretary to the Lords Justices. Whatever was the obligation which he had formerly received from Anne, the poet appears to aim at fomething of the fame fort from Of the poem the intention feems to have been, to shew that he had the fame extravagant strain of praise for a King as for a Queen. To discover, at the very outset of a foreigner's reign, that the Gods bless his new subjects in such a King, is something Neither was this deemed one of more than praise. We do not find it in his works. his excuseable pieces.

Young's father had been well acquainted with Lady Anne Wharton, the first wife of Thomas Wharton, Esq; afterwards Marquis of Wharton—a Lady celebrated for her poetical talents by Burnet and by Waller. To the Dean of Sarum's visitation fermon, already mentioned, were added some verses

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on its being translated into English, at the instance of Waller, by Atwood. Wharton, after he became ennobled, did not drop the son of his old friend. In him, during the short time he lived, Young sound a patron, and in his dissolute descendant a friend and a companion. The Marquis died in April 1715. The beginning of the next year the young Marquis set out upon his travels, from which he returned in about a twelvemonth. The beginning of 1717 carried him to Ireland; where, says the Biographia, "on the so score of his extraordinary qualities, he had the homour done him of being admitted, though under age, to take his seat in the House of Lords."

With this unhappy character it is not unlikely that Young went to Ireland. From his Letter to Richardfon on Original Composition, it is clear he was, at some period of his life, in that country. "I remember." favs he, in that Letter, speaking of Swift, " as I and " others were taking with him an evening walk, about " a mile out of Dublin, he stopt short; we passed on; so but, perceiving he did not follow us, I went back, " and found him fixed as a statue, and earnestly gaso zing upward at a noble elm, which in its uppermost " branches was much withered and decayed. Point-"ing at it," he faid, "I shall be like that tree, I " shall die at top." Is it not probable, that this visit to Ireland was paid when he had an opportunity of going thither with his avowed friend and patron ?

From The Englishman it appears that a tragedy by Young was in the theatre so early as 1713. Yet Businis was not brought upon Drury-Lane Stage till 1719. It was inscribed to the Duke of Newcastle, "because the late instances he had received of his Grace's undedeferved and uncommon favour, in an affair of some consequence, foreign to the theatre, had taken from him

i him the privilege of chusing a patron." The De-

dication he afterwards suppressed.

Businis was followed in the year 1721 by The Revenge. Left at liberty now to chuse his patron, he dedicated this samous tragedy to the Duke of Wharton. "Your Grace," says the Dedication, "has been pleased to make yourself accessary to the following feenes, not only by suggesting the most beautiful incident in them, but by making all possible provision for the success of the whole."

That his Grace should have suggested the incident to which he alludes, whatever that incident be, is not unlikely. The last mental exertion of the superannuated young man, in his quarters at Lerida, in Spain, was some scenes of a tragedy on the story of Mary

Queen of Scots.

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Dryden dedicated Marriage a la Mode to Wharton's infamous relation Rochester; whom he acknowledges not only as the defender of his poetry, but as the promoter of his fortune. Young concludes his address to Wharton thus-" Mr present fortune is his boun. "ty, and my future his care; which I will venture to " fay will be always remembered to his honour, fince " he, I know, intended his generofity as an encourage-" ment to merit, though, through his very pardon-" able partiality to one who bears him fo fincere a duty " and respect, I happen to receive the benefit of it." That he ever had fuch a patron as Wharton, Young took all the pains in his power to conceal from the world, by excluding this dedication from his works. He should have remembered, that he at the same time concealed his obligation to Wharton for the most beautiful incident in what is furely not his least beautiful composition. The passage just quoted is, in a poem afterwards addressed to Walpole, literally copied:

Be this thy partial smile from censure free; "Twas meant for merit, though it fell on me.

While Young, who, in his Love of Fame, complains greviously how often dedications worth an Ethiops white, was painting an amiable Duke of Wharton in perishable prose, Pope was perhaps beginning to deficibe the form and wonder of his days in lasting verse.

To the patronage of such a character, had Young studied men as much as Pope, he would have known how little to have trusted. Young, however, was certainly indebted to it for something material; and the Duke's regard for Young, added to his Lust of Praise, procured to All-souls College a donation, which was not forgotten by the poet when he dedica-

ted The Revenge.

It will furprize you to fee me cite fecond Atkins, Cafe 136, Stiles versus the Attorney General, 14th March 1740; as authority for the Life of a Poet. But Biographers do not always find fuch certain guides as the oaths of those whose lives they write. Chancellor Hardwicke was to determine whether two annuities, granted by the Duke of Wharton to Young, were for legal confiderations. One was dated the 24th of March 1719, and accounted for his Grace's bountyin a style princely and commendable, if not legals confidering that the public good is advanced by the se encouragement of learning and the polite arts, and being pleased therein with the attempts of Dr "Young, in confideration thereof, and of the love " he bore him, &c." The other was dated the 10th. of July, 1722.

Young, on his examination, fwore that he quitted the Exeter family, and refused an annuity of rool, which had been offered him for his life if he would continue tutor to Lord Burleigh, upon the pressing folicitations of the Duke of Wharton, and his Grace's assurances of providing for him in a much more ample manner. It also appeared that the Duke had given him a bond for 600l, dated the 15th of March 1721, in consideration of his taking several journies,

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and being at great expences, in order to be chosen member of the House of Commons at the Duke's defire, and in consideration of his not taking two livings of 200l. and 400l. in the gift of All-souls College, on his Grace's promises of serving and advancing him in the world.

Of his adventures in the Exeter family I am unable to give any account. The attempt to get into Parliament was at Cirencester, where Young stood a contested election. His Grace discovered in him talents for oratory as well as for poetry. Nor was this judgment wrong. Young, after he took orders, became a very popular preacher, and was much followed for the grace and animation of his delivery. By his oratorical talents he was once in his life, according to the Biographia, deserted. As he was preaching in his turn at St James's, he plainly perceived it was out of his power to command the attention of his audience. This so affected the feelings of the preacher, that he sat back in the pulpit, and burst into tears.—But we must pursue his poetical life.

In 1719 he lamented the death of Addison, in a Letter addressed to their common friend Tickell. For the secret history of the following lines, if they con-

tain any, it is now vain to feek:

In joy once join'd, in forrow, now, for years—Partner in grief, and brother of my tears,
Tickell, accept this verse, thy mournful due.

From your account of Tickell it appears that he and Young used to "communicate to each other whatever verses they wrote, even to the least things."

In 1719 appeared a Paraphrase on Part of the Book of Job. Parker, to whom it is dedicated, had not long, by means of the seals, been qualified for a patron. Of this work the author's opinion may be known from his Letter to Curll: "You seem, in the S3." Collection

"Collection you propose, to have omitted what I think may claim the first place in it; I mean a "Translation from Part of Job, printed by Mr Ton-"fon." The Dedication, which was only suffered to appear in Tonson's edition, while it speaks with satisfaction of his present retirement, seems to make an unusual struggle to escape from retirement. But every one who sings in the dark does not sing from joy. It is addressed, in no common strain of slattery, to a Chancellor, of whom he clearly appears to have had no kind of knowledge.

Of his Satires it would not have been impossible to fix the dates without the assistance of first editions, which, as you had occasion to observe in your account of Dryden, are with difficulty found. We must then have referred to the Poems, to discover when they were written. For these internal notes of time we should not have referred in vain. The first Satire laments that "Guilt's chief soe in Addison is sled."

The fecond, addressing himself, asks,

Is thy ambition sweating for a rhyme, Thou unambitious fool, at this late time; A fool at forty is a fool indeed.

The Satires were originally published separately in folio, under the title of The Universal Passion. These passages six the appearance of the first to about 1725, the time at which it came out. As Young seldom suffered his pen to dry, after he had once dipped it in poetr, we may conclude that he began his Satires soon after he had written the Paraphrase on Job. The last Satire was certainly sinished in the beginning of the year 1726. In December 1725 the King, in his passage from Helvoetsluys, escaped with great difficulty from a storm by landing at Rye; and the conclusion of the Satire turns the escape into a miracle, in such an encomiastic strain of compliment as poetry too often seeks to pay to royalty.

From

From the fixth of these poems we learn, Midst empire's charms, how Carolina's heart Glow'd with the love of virtue and of art:

fince the grateful poet tells us in the next couplet,

Her favour is diffus'd to that degree, Excess of goodness! it has dawn'd on me.

Her Majesty had stood godmother, and given her name to a daughter of the Lady whom Young married in 1731.

The fifth Satire, on Women, was not published till

1727; and the fixth not till 1728.

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To these Poems, when, in 1728, he gathered them into one publication, he prefixed a Preface; in which he observes, that " no man can converse much in the " world, but, at what he meets with, he must either " be infenfible or grieve, or be angry or fmile. Now " to fmile at it, and turn it into ridicule," adds he, " I "think most eligible, as it hurts ourselves least, and " gives vice and folly the greatest offence.—Laugh-" ing at the misconduct of the world, will, in a great " measure, ease us of any more disagreeable passion " about it. One passion is more effectually driven out "by another than by reason, whatever some teach." So wrote, and fo of course thought, the lively and witty Satirist at the grave age of almost fifty, who, many years earlier in life, wrote the Last Day. After all, Swift pronounced of these Satires, that they should either have been more angry, or more merry.

Is it not fomewhat fingular that Young preserved, without any palliation, this Presace, so bluntly decisive in favour of laughing at the world, in the same collection of his works which contains the mournful,

angry, gloomy Night Thoughts?

At the conclusion of the Preface he applies Plato's beautiful

beautiful fable of the Birth of Love to modern poetry, with the addition, "that Poetry, like Love, is a lit-"tle fubject to blindness, which makes her mistake "her way to preferments and honours; and that she " retains a dutiful admiration of her father's family; " but divides her favours, and generally lives with her " mother's relations." Poetry, it is true, did not lead Young to preferments or to honours; but was there not fomething like blindness in the flattery which he fometimes forced her, and her fifter Profe, to utter? She was always, indeed, taught by him to entertain a most dutiful admiration of riches; but furely Young, though nearly related to Poetry, had no connexion with her whom Plato makes the mother of Love. That he could not well complain of being related to Poverty appears clearly from the frequent bounties which his gratitude records, and from the wealth which he left behind him. By The Universal Passion he acquired no vulgar fortune, more than three thoufand pounds. A confiderable fum had already been swallowed up in the South-Sea. For this loss he took the vengeance of an author. His Muse makes poetical use more than once of a South-Sea Dream.

It is related by Mr Spence, in his Manuscript Anecdotes, on the authority of Mr Rawlinson, that Young, upon the publication of his Universal Passion, received from the Duke of Grafton two thousand pounds; and that, when one of his friends exclaimed, Two thousand pounds for a poem! he faid it was the best bargain he ever made in his life, for the poem was

worth four thousand.

This story may be true; but it feems to have been raised from the two answers of Lord Burghley and

Sir Philip Sidney in Spenfer's Life.

After inscribing his Satires, not without the hope of preferments and honours, to the Duke of Dorset, Mr Dodington, Mr Spenser Compton, Lady Elizabeth Germain, and Sir Robert Walpole, he returns to plain

panegyric.

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panegyric. In 1726 he addressed a poem to Sir Robert Walpole, of which the title sufficiently explains the intention. If Young was a ready celebrator, he did not endeavour, or did not choose, to be a slasting one. The Instalment is among the pieces he did not admit into the number of his excuseable writings. Yet it contains a couplet which pretends to pant after the power of bestowing immortality:

Oh how I long, enkindled by the theme, In deep eternity to launch thy name!

The bounty of the former reign feems to have been continued, possibly increased, in this. Whatever it was, the poet thought he deserved it;—for he was not ashamed to acknowledge what, without his acknowledgment, would now perhaps never have been known:

My breast, O Walpole, glows with grateful fire. The streams of royal bounty, turn'd by thee, Refresh the dry domains of poefy.

If the purity of modern patriotism term Young a pensioner, it must at least be confessed he was a grateful one.

The reign of the new monarch was ushered in by Young with Ocean, an Ode. The hint of it was taken from the royal speech, which recommended the increase and encouragement of the seamen; that they might be invited, rather than compelled by force and violence, to enter into the service of their country;—a plan which humanity must lament that policy has not even yet been able, or willing, to carry into execution. Prefixed to the original publication were an Ode to the King, Pater Patrice, and an Essay on Lyric Poetry. It is but justice to confess, that he preserved neither of them; and that the ode itself, which in the first edition,

tion, and in the last, consists of seventy-three stanzas, in the author's own edition is reduced to forty-nine. Among the omitted passages is a Wish, that concluded the poem, which sew would have suspected Young of forming; and of which sew, after having formed it, would consess something like their shame by suppression.

It flood originally so high in the author's opinion, that he intitled the Poem, "Ocean, an Ode. Con. "cluding with a wish." This wish consists of thirteen

fanzas. The first runs thus:

O may I fleal
Along the vale
Of humble life, fecure from foes!
My friend fincere,
My judgment clear,
And gentle business my repose!

The three last stanzas are not more remarkable for just rhymes; but, altogether, they will make rather a curious page in the life of Young.

Prophetic schemes,
And golden dreams,
May I, unfanguine, cast away!
Have what I have,
And live, not leave,
Enamoured of the present day!

My hours my own!

My faults unknown!

My chief revenue in content!

Then leave one beam

Of honest fame!

And scorn the laboured monument!

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Till that great turn

When mighty nature's felf shall die,

Time cease to glide,

With human pride,

Sunk in the ocean of eternity!

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It is whimfical that he, who was foon to bid adieu to rhyme, should fix upon a measure in which rhyme abounds even to satiety. Of this he said, in his Essay on Lyric Poetry, prefixed to the Poem,—" For the more harmony likewise I chose the frequent return of rhyme, which laid me under great difficulties, But difficulties, overcome, give grace and pleasure. Nor can I account for the pleasure of rhyme in general (of which the moderns are too fond) but from this truth." Yet the moderns surely deserve not much censure for their sondness of what, by his own confession, affords pleasure, and abounds in harmony.

The next paragraph in his essay did not occur to him when he talked of that great turn in the stanza just quoted. "But then the writer must take care "that the difficulty is overcome. That is, he must make rhyme consistent with as perfect sense and ex"pression, as could be expected if he was perfectly free from that shackle."

Another part of this Essay vill convict the following stanza of, what every reader will discover in it, involuntary burlesque."

The northern blast,
The shattered mast,
The syrt, the whirlpool, and the rock,
The breaking spout,
The stars gone out,
The boiling streight, the monster's shock.

But would the English poets fill quite so many volumes, if all their productions were to be tried, like this, by an elaborate essay on each particular species of poetry of which they exhibit specimens?

If Young be not a Lyric poet, he is at least a critic in that fort of poetry; and, if his Lyric poetry can be proved bad, it was first proved so by his own criti-

cifm. This furely is candid.

Milbourne was styled by Pope the fairest of Critics, only because he exhibited his own version of Virgil to be compared with Dryden's which he condemned, and with which every reader had it otherwise in his power to compare it. Young was surely not the most unfair of poets for prefixing to a Lyric composition an essay on Lyric poetry so just and impartial as to condemn himself.

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We shall soon come to a work, before which we find indeed no critical Essay, but which distains to shrink from the touch-stone of the severest critic; and which certainly, as I remember to have heard you say, if it contains some of the worst, contains also some of the best things in the language.

Soon after the appearance of "Ocean," when he was almost fifty, Young entered into Orders. In April 1728, not long after he put on the gown, he was

appointed chaplain to George the Second.

The tragedy of The Brothers, which was already in rehearfal, he immediately withdrew from the stage. The managers resigned it with some reluctance to the delicacy of the new clergyman. The Epilogue to The Brothers, the only appendage to any of his three plays which he added himself, is, I believe, the only one of the kind. He calls it an historical Epilogue. Finding that Guilt's dreadful close his narrow scene denied, he, in a manner, continues the tragedy in the Epilogue, and relates how Rome revenged the shade of Demetrius, and punished Perseus for this night's deed.

Of Young's taking Orders fomething is told by

the biographer of Pope, which places the eafiness and simplicity of the poet in a singular light. When he determined on the Church, he did not address himself to Sherlock, to Atterbury, or to Hare, for the best instructions in Theology, but to Pope; who, in a youthful frolic, advised the diligent perusal of Thomas Aquinas. With this treasure Young retired from interruption to an obscure place in the suburbs. His poetical guide to godliness hearing nothing of him during half a year, and apprehending he might have carried the jest too far, sought after him, and sound him just in time to prevent what Ruffhead calls an tr-

retrievable derangement.

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That attachment to his favourite study which made him think a poet the furest guide in his new protestion, left him little doubt whether poetry was the furest path to its honours and preferments. Not long indeed after he took Orders, he published in prose, 1728, A true Estimate of Human Life, dedicated, notwithstanding the Latin quotations with which it abounds, to the Queen; and a fermon preached before the House of Commons, 1729, on the martyrdom of King Charles, intituled, An Apology for Princes, or the Reverence due to Government. But the "Second Dif-" course," the counterpart of his " Estimate," without which it cannot be called "a true estimate," though in 1728 it was announced as "foon to be published," never appeared; and his old friends the Muses were not forgotten. In 1730 he relapted to poetry, and tent into the world Imperium Pelagi; a Naval Lyric, written in Imitation of Pindar's Spirit, occasioned by His Majesty's Return from Hanover, September 1729, and the fucceeding Peace. It is inscribed to the Duke of Chandos. In the Preface we are told, that the Ode is the most spirited kind of Poetry, and that the Pindaric is the most spirited kind of Ode. "This I speak," he adds, with fufficient candour, "at my own very great " peril. But truth has an eternal title to our confef-VOL. IV. " fion: Gion, though we are fure to fuffer by it." Behold, again, the fairest of poets. Young's Imperium Pelagi, as well as his tragedies, was ridiculed in Fielding's Tom Thumb; but let us not forget, that it was one of his pieces which the author of the Night Thoughts deliberately refused to own.

Not long after this Pindaric attempt, he published two Epistles to Pope, concerning the Authors of the Age, 1730. Of these poems one occasion seems to have been an apprehension lest, from the liveliness of his satires, he should not be deemed sufficiently serious

for promotion in the Church.

In July 1730 he was presented by his College to the rectory of Welwyn in Hertfordshire. In May 1731 he married Lady Elizabeth Lee, daughter of the Earl of Litchfield, and widow of Colonel Lee. His connexion with this Lady arose from his father's acquaintance, already mentioned, with Lady Anne Wharton, who was coheires of Sir Henry Lee of Ditchley in Oxfordshire. Poetry had lately been taught by Addison to aspire to the arms of nobility, though not with extraordinary happiness.

We may naturally conclude that Young now gave himself up in some measure to the comforts of his new connexion, and to the expectations of that preferment which he thought due to his poetical talents, or, at least, to the manner in which they had so fre-

quently been exerted.

The next production of his Muse was The Sea-piece,

in two odes.

Young enjoys the credit of what is called an Extempore Epigram on Voltaire; who, when he was in England, ridiculed, in the company of the jealous English poet, Milton's allegory of Sin and Death—

You are so witty, profligate, and thin, At once we think thee Milton, Death, and Sin.

From the following passage in the poetical Dedication of his Sea-piece to Voltaire, it seems that his extemporaneous reproof, if it must be extemporaneous, for what sew will now affirm Voltaire to have deserved any reproof, was something longer than a distich, and something more gentle than the distich just quoted.

No stranger, Sir, though born in foreign climes.
On Dorset downs, when Milton's page,
With Sin and Death provok'd thy rage,
Thy rage provok'd, who sooth'd with gentle rhymes?

By Dorset downs he probably meant Mr Dodington's seat. In Pitt's Poems is An Epistle to Dr Edward Young, at Eastbury in Dorsetsbire, on the Review at Sarum, 1722.

While with your Dodington retired you sit, Charm'd with his flowing Burgundy and wit, &c.

Thomson, in his Autumn, addressing Mr Dodington, calls his feat the seat of the Muses,

Where, in the fecret bower and winding walk, For virtuous Young and thee they twine the bay.

The praises Thomson bestows but a few lines before on Philips, the second

Who nobly durst, in rhyme-unsettered verse, With British freedom sing the British song;

added to Thomson's example and success, might perhaps induce Young, as we shall see presently, to write his great work without rhyme.

In 1734 he published The foreign Address, or the best Argument for Peace; occasioned by the British Fleet and the Posture of Affairs. Written in the Character of a T 2 Sailor.

Sailer. It is not to be found in the author's four vo-

He now appears to have given up all hopes of overtaking Pindar, and perhaps at last resolved to turn his ambition to some original species of poetry. This poem concludes with a formal sarewel to Ode, which sew of Young's readers will regret:

My shell which Clio gave, which Kings applaud, Which Europe's bleeding Genius call'd abroad, Adieu!

In a species of poetry altogether his own he next tried

his skill, and succeeded.

Of his wife he was deprived in 1741. She had loft in her life-time, at feventeen years of age, an amiable daughter, who was just married to Mr Temple, son of Lord Palmerston. This was one of her three children by Colonel Lee. Mr Temple did not long remain after his wife *. Mr and Mrs Temple have always been considered as Philander and Narcissa. If they were, they did not die long before Lady E. Young. How suddenly and how nearly together the deaths of the three persons whom he laments, happened, none who has read the Night Thoughts, and who has not read them, needs to be informed.

Infatiate Archer! could not one suffice?
Thy shaft slew thrice; and thrice my peace was slain!
And thrice, ere thrice you moon had fill'd her horn.

To the forrow Young felt at his losses we are indebted for these poems. There is a pleasure sure in sadness which mourners only know. Of these poems the f

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^{*} The Irish Peerage, if authentic, in the account of Lord Palmerston's family, somewhat confuses this business; but I take what I have related to be the fact.

two or three first have been perused perhaps more eagerly, and more frequently, than the rest. When he got as far as the fourth or fifth, his grief was naturally either diminished or exhausted. We find the same religion, the same piety; but we hear less of Philander and of Narcissa.

Mrs Temple died in her bridal hour at Nice. Young, with the rest of her family, accompanied her to the continent.

I flew, I fnatch'd her from the rigid North, And bore her nearer to the fun.

The poet feems to dwell with more melancholy on the deaths of Philander and Narcissa, than of his wife. But it is only for this reason. He who runs and reads may remember, that in the Night Thoughts Philander and Narcissa are often mentioned, and often lamented. To recollect lamentations over the author's wife, the memory must have been charged with diffinct passages. This Lady brought him one child, Frederick, now living, to whom the Prince of Wales.

was godfather.

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That domestic grief is, in the first instance, to be thanked for these ornaments to our language it is impossible to deny. Nor would it be common hardiness. to contend, that worldly discontent had no hand in these joint productions of poetry and piety. Yet am I by no means fure that, at any rate, we should not have had something of the same colour from Young's pencil, notwithstanding the liveliness of his fatires. In fo long a life, causes for discontent and occasions for grief must have occurred. It is not clear to me. that his Muse was not sitting upon the watch for the first which happened. Night Thoughts were not uncommon to her, even when first she visited the poet. and at a time when he himself was remarkable neither for gravity nor gloominefs. In his Last Day, T 3 almost . almost his earliest poem, he calls her the melancholy Maid.

whom difmal scenes delight, Frequent at tombs and in the realms of Night.

In the prayer which concludes the fecond book of the fame poem, he fays—

—Oh! permit the gloom of folemn night To facred thought may forcibly invite. Oh! how divine to tread the milky way, To the bright palace of Eternal Day!

When Young was writing a tragedy, Grafton is faid by Spence to have fent him a human skull, with a candle in it, as a lamp; and the poet is reported to have used it.

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What he calls "The true estimate of Human Life," which has already been mentioned, exhibits only the wrong side of the tapestry; and being asked why he did not show the right, he is said to have replied he could not—though by others it has been told me that this was finished, but that a Lady's monkey tore it in pieces before there existed any copy.

Still, is it altogether fair to drefs up the poet for the man, and to bring the gloominess of the Night Thoughts to prove the gloominess of Young, and to thew that his genius, like the genius of Swift, was in some measure the sullen inspiration of discontent?

From them who answer in the affirmative it should not be concealed that, though Invisibilia non decipiunt was inscribed upon a deception in Young's grounds, and Ambulantes in horto audierunt vocem Dei on a building in his garden, his parish was indebted to the good humour of the author of the Night Thoughts for an assembly and a bowling-green.

Whether you think with me, I know not; but the famous

famous De mortuis nil nisi bonum, always appeared to me to favour more of female weakness than of manly reason. He that has too much feeling to speak ill of the dead, who, if they cannot defend themselves, are at least ignorant of his abuse, will not hesitate by the most wanton calumny to destroy the quiet, the reputation, the fortune of the living. Censure is not heard beneath the tomb any more than praise. mortuis nil nisi verum-De vivis nil nisi bonum-would approach perhaps much nearer to good fense. After all, the few handfuls of remaining dust which once composed the body of the author of the Night Thoughts, feel not much concern whether Young paffes now for a man of forrow, or for a fellow of infinite jest. To this favour must come the whole samily of Yorick.—His immortal part, wherever that now dwells, is still less solicitous on this head.

But to a fon of worth and fensibility it is of some little consequence whether contemporaries believe, and posterity be taught to believe, that his debauched and reprobate life cast a Stygian gloom over the evening of his father's days, saved him the trouble of feigning a character completely detestable, and succeeded at last in bringing his gray bairs with forrow to the

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The humanity of the world, little fatisfied with inventing perhaps a melancholy disposition for the father, proceeds next to invent an argument in support of their invention, and chooses that Lorenzo should be Young's own son. The Biographia and every account of Young pretty roundly affert this to be the fact; of the absolute impossibility of which the Biographia itself, in particular dates, contains undeniable evidence. Readers I know there are of a strange turn of mind, who will hereaster peruse the Night Thoughts with less satisfaction; who will wish they had still been deceived; who will quarrel with me for discovering that no such character as their Lorenzo ever

ever yet disgraced human nature; or broke a father's heart. Yet would these admirers of the sublime and terrible be offended, should you set them down for cruel and for savage.

Of this report, inhuman to the furviving fon, if it be untrue, in proportion as the character of Lorenzo is diabolical, where are we to find the proofs? Per-

haps it is clear from the poems.

From the first line to the last of the Night Thoughts, no one expression can be discovered which betrays any thing like the father. In the second Night I find an expression which betrays something else; that Lorenzo was his friend; one, it is possible, of his former companions; one of the Duke of Wharton's set. The Poet styles him gay Friend—an appellation not very natural from a pious incensed father to such a being as he paints Lorenzo, and that being his son.

But let us see how he has sketched this dreadful portrait, from the sight of some of whose features the artist himself must have turned away with horror.

—A subject more shocking, if his only child really sat to him, than the crucifixion of Michael Angelo; upon the horrid story told of which, Young composed a short Poem of sourteen lines in the early part of life, which he did not think deserved to be republished.

In the first Night, the address to the Poet's supposed fon is,

Lorenzo, Fortune makes her court to thee.

In the fifth Night-

And burns Lorenzo still for the sublime Of life? to hang his airy nest on high?

Is this a picture of the fon of the rector of Welwyn?

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Eighth Night-

In foreign realms (for thou hast travelled far)—which even now does not apply to his fon.

In Night five-

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So wept Lorenzo fair Clarissa's fate, Who gave that angel-boy on whom he dotes, And died to give him, orphan'd in his birth!

At the beginning of the fifth Night we find-

Lorenzo, to recriminate is just.

I grant the man is vain who writes for praise.

But, to cut short all enquiry; if any one of these passages, if any passage in the poems be applicable, my friend shall pass for Lorenzo. The son of the author of the Night Thoughts was not old enough, when they were written, to recriminate, or to be a father. The Night Thoughts were begun immediately after the mournful events of 1741. The first Nights appear in the books of the company of Stationers, as the property of Robert Dodsley, in 1742. The Preface to Night Seven is dated July the 7th, 1744. marriage, in confequence of which the supposed Lorenzo was born, happened in May 1731. Young's child was not born till June 1733. In 1741 this Lorenzo, this finished infidel, this father, to whose education Vice had for some years put the last hand, was only eight years old.

An anecdote of this cruel fort, so open to contradiction, so impossible to be true, who could propagate? Thus easily are blasted the reputations of the living

and of the dead.

Who then was Lorenzo? exclaim the readers I have

have mentioned. If he was not his fon, which would have been finely terrible, was he not his nephew, his confin?

These are questions which I do not pretend to answer. For the sake of human nature, I could wish Lorenzo to have been only the creation of the Poet's fancy—no more than the Quintius of Anti Lucretius, quo nomine, says Polignac, quemvis Atheum intellige. That this was the case, many expressions in the Night Thoughts would seem to prove, did not a passage in Night Eight appear to shew that he had somebody in his eye for the ground-work at least of the painting. Lovelace or Lorenzo may be seigned characters; but a writer does not seign a name of which he only gives the initial letter.

Tell not Calista. She will laugh thee dead, Or send thee to her hermitage with L-.

The Biographia, not satisfied with pointing out the son of Young, in that son's life-time, as his sather's Lorenzo, travels out of its way into the history of the son, and tells of his having been forbidden his college at Oxford for misbehaviour. How such anecdotes, were they true, tend to illustrate the life of Young, it is not easy to discover. If the son of the author of the Night Thoughts was indeed forbidden his college for a time, at one of our Universities, the author of Paradise Loss is by some supposed to have been disgracefully ejected from the other. From juvenile sollies who is free? But, whatever the Biographia chooses to relate, the son of Young experienced no dismission from his college either lasting or temporary.

Yet, were nature to indulge him with a fecond youth, and to leave him at the fame time the experience of that which is past, he would probably spend it differently—who would not?—he would certainly be the occasion of less uneasiness to his father. But,

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from the same experience, he would as certainly, in the same case, be treated differently by his father.

Young was a poet; poets, with reverence be it spoken, do not make the best parents. Fancy and imagination seldom deign to stoop from their heights; always stoop unwillingly to the low level of common duties. Aloof from vulgar life, they pursue their rapid slight beyond the ken of mortals, and descend not to earth but when obliged by necessity. The prose of ordinary occurrences is beneath the dignity of poetry.

He who is connected with the Author of the Night Thoughts only by veneration for the Poet and the Christian, may be allowed to observe, that Young is one of those concerning whom, as you remark in your account of Addison, it is proper rather to say

" nothing that is false than all that is true."

But the fon of Young would almost sooner, I know, pass for a Lorenzo, than see himself vindicated, at the expence of his father's memory, from sollies which, if it was blameable in a boy to have committed them, it is surely praise-worthy in a man to lament, and certainly not only unnecessary but cruel in a biographer to record.

Of the Night Thoughts, notwithstanding their author's professed retirement, all are inscribed to great or to growing names. He had not yet weaned himself from Earls and Dukes, from Speakers of the House of Commons, Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, and Chancellors of the Exchequer. In Night Eight the politician plainly betrays himself—

Think no post needful that demands a knave. When late our civil helm was shifting hands, So P— thought: think better if you can.

Yet it must be confessed, that at the conclusion of Night

Night Nine, weary perhaps of courting earthly patrons, he tells his foul,

Henceforth
Thy patron he, whose diadem has dropt
You gems of heaven; Eternity thy prize;
And leave the racers of the world their own.

The Fourth Night was addressed by "a much-in"debted Muse" to the Honourable Mr Yorke, now
Lord Hardwicke; who meant to have laid the Muse
under still greater obligations, by the living of Shensield in Essex, if it had become vacant.

The First Night concludes with this passage-

Dark, though not blind, like thee, Meonides; Or Milton, thee. Ah! could I reach your strain; Or his who made Meonides our own!

Man too he fung. Immortal man I fing.

Oh had he prest his theme, pursued the track

Which opens out of darkness into day!

Oh had he mounted on his wing of fire,

Soar'd, where I fink, and sung immortal man—

How had it blest mankind, and rescued me!

To the author of these lines was dedicated, in 1756, the first volume of an Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope, which attempted, whether justly or not, to pluck from Pope his Wing of Fire, and to reduce him to a rank at least one degree lower than the first class of English poets. If Young accepted and approved the dedication, he countenanced this attack upon the same of him whom he invokes as his Muse.

Part of "paper-sparing" Pope's Third Book of the Odyssey, deposited in the Museum, is written upon the back of a Letter signed E. Young, which is clearly the hand-writing of our Young. The Letter, dated only May the 2d, seems obscure; but there can be

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little doubt that the friendship he requests was a literary one, and that he had the highest literary opinion of Pope. The recuest was a prologue, I am told.

" Dear Sir,

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May the 2d.

"Having been often from home, I know not if you have done me the favour of calling on me. But, be that as it will, I much want that instance of your friendship I mentioned in my last; a friend-in ship I am very sensible I can receive from no one but yourself. I should not urge this thing so much but for very particular reasons; nor can you be at a loss to conceive how a trifle of this nature may be of serious moment to me; and while I am in hopes of the great advantage of your advice about it, I shall not be so absurd as to make any surther step without it. I know you are much engaged, and only hope to hear of you at your entire leifure.

"I am, Sir, your most faithful,
"and obedient fervant,

" E. YOUNG."

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Nay, even after Pope's death, he fays, in Nigh Seven:

Pope, who could'st make immortals, art thou dead?

Either the Estay, then, was dedicated to a patron who disapproved its doctrine, which I have been told by the author was not the case; or Young, in his old age, bartered for a dedication an opinion entertained of his friend through all that part of life when he must have been best able to form opinions.

From this account of Young, two or three short passages, which stand almost together in Night Four, should not be excluded. They afford a picture, by his own hand, from the study of which my readers mychoose to form their own opinion of the seatures of his mind, and the complexion of his life.

Vol. IV.

Ah me! the dire effect
Of loitering here, of death defrauded long;
Of old fo gracious (and let that fuffice),
My very master knows me not.

I've been fo long remember'd, I forgot.

When in his courtier's ears I'm pour my plaint, They drink it as the Nectar of the Great; And squeeze my hand, and beg me come to-morrow.

Twice-told the period spent on stubborn Troy, Court favour, yet untaken, I besiege.

If this fong lives, Posterity shall know, One, though in Britain born, with courtiers bred, Who thought ev'n gold might come a day too late: Nor on his subtle death-bed plann'd his scheme For suture vacancies in church or state.

Deduct from the writer's age twice told the period spent on stubbern Troy, and you will still leave him more than 40 when he sat down to the miserable siege of court savour. He has before told us

" A fool at 40 is a fool indeed."

After all, the fiege feems to have been raifed only in confequence of what the General thought his death bed.

By these extraordinary Poems, written after he was sixty, of which I have been led to say so much, I hope, by the wish of doing justice to the living and the dead, it was the desire of Young to be principally known. He entitled the four volumes which he published himself, The Works of the Author of the Night Thoughts. While it is remembered that from these he excluded many of his writings, let it not be forgotten that the rejected pieces contained nothing prejudicial

to the cause of virtue, or of religion. Were every thing that Young ever wrote to be published, he would only appear perhaps in a less respectable light as a poet, and more despicable as a dedicator: he would not pass for a worse christian, or for a worse man.—This enviable praise is due to Young. Can it be claim ed by every writer? His dedications, after all, he had perhaps no right to suppress. They all, I believe, speak, not a little to the credit of his gratitude, of favours received; and I know not whether the author, who has once solemnly printed an acknowledgment of a favour, should not always print it.

Is it to the credit or to the discredit of Young, as a poet, that of his Night Thoughis the French are par-

ticularly fond?

Of the Epitaph on Lord Aubrey Beauclerk, dated 1740, all I know is, that I find it in the late body of English Poetry, and that I am forry to find it there.

Notwithstanding the farewell which he seemed to have taken in the Night Thoughts of every thing which bore the least resemblance to ambition, he dipped again in politics. In 1745 he wrote Resections on the public Situation of the Kingdom, addressed to the Duke of Newcastle—indignant, as it appears, to behold

—a Pope-bred Princeling crawl ashore,
And whistle cut-throats, with those swords that

fcrap'd

Their barren rocks for wretched sustenance, To cut his passage to the British throne.

This political poem might be called a Night Thought. Indeed it was originally printed as the conclusion of the Night Thoughts, though he did not gather it with his other works.

Prefixed to the fecond edition of Howe's Devout Meditations is a Letter from Young, dated January 19, 1752, addressed to Archibald Macauly, Esq; thank-

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ing him for the book, which he fays "he shall never as lay far out of his reach; for a greater demonstration of a found head and a sincere heart he never faw."

In 1753, when The Brothers had lain by him above thirty years, it appeared upon the stage. If any part of his fortune had been acquired by servility of adulation, he now determined to deduct from it no inconsiderable sum, as a gift to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. To this sum he hoped the profits of The Brothers would amount. In his calculation he was deceived; but by the bad success of his play the Society was not a loser. The author made up the sum he originally intended, which was a thought

fand pounds, from his own pocket.

The next performance which he printed was a profe publication, entitled, The Centaur not fabulous, in fix Letters to a Friend on the Life in Vogue. The conclustion is dated November 29, 1754. In the third Letter is described the death-bed of the gay, young, noble, ingenious, accomplished, and most wretched Altamont. His last words were—"My principles have poisoned my friend, my extravagance has beggared my boy, my unkindness has murdered my wife!" Either Altamont and Lorenzo were the twin production of fancy, or Young was unlucky enough to know two characters who bore no little resemblance to each other in perfection of wickedness. Report has been accustomed to call Altamont Lord Euston.

The Old Man's Relapse, occasioned by an Epistle to Walpole, if it was written by Young, which I much doubt, must have been written very late in life. It has been seen, I am told, in a Miscellany published thirty years before his death.—In 1758, he exhibited The Old Man's Relapse in more than words, by again becoming a dedicator, and publishing a fermon address.

fed to the King.

The lively Letter in prose on Original Composition, addressed

addressed to Richardson the author of Clarissa, appeared in 1759. Though he despairs " of breaking "through the frozen obstructions of age and care's "incumbent cloud, into that slow of thought and brightness of expression which subjects so polite require;" yet is it more like the production of untamed, unbridled youth, than of jaded sourscore. Some sevenfold volumes put him in mind of Ovid's sevenfold channels of the Nile at the conslagration.

Pulverulenta vocant, feptem fine flumine valles.

Such leaden labours are like Lycurgus's iron money, which was so much less in value than in bulk, that it required barns for strong boxes, and a yoke of oxen to

draw five hundred pounds.

If there is a famine of invention in the land, we must travel, he says, like Joseph's brethren, far for food; we must visit the remote and rich antients. But an inventive genius may safely stay at home; that, like the widow's cruse, is divinely replenished from within, and affords us a miraculous delight. He asks why it should seem altogether impossible, that Heaven's latest editions of the human mind may be the most correct and sair? And Jonson, he tells us, was very searned, as Samson was very strong, to his own hurt. Blind to the nature of tragedy, he pulled down all antiquity on his head, and buried himself under it.

Is this " care's incumbent cloud," or "the frozen

" obstructions of age?"

In this letter Pope is severely censured for his "fall from Homer's numbers, free as air, lofty and har-"monious as the spheres, into childish shackles and tinkling sounds; for putting Achilles in petticoats a second time;"—but we are told that the dying swan talked over an Epic plan with Young a few weeks before his decease.

Young's chief inducement to write this letter was, as he confesses, that he might erect a monumental marble to the memory of an old friend. He, who employed his pious pen for almost the last time in thus doing justice to the exemplary death-bed of Addison, might probably, at the close of his own life, afford no unuseful lesson for the deaths of others.

In the postfcript he writes to Richardson, that he will see in his next how far Addison is an original.

But no other letter appears.

The few lines which stand in the last edition, as fent by Lord Melcombe to Dr Young, not long before his Lordship's death, were indeed so sent, but were only an introduction to what was there meant by The Muse's latest Spark. The poem is necessary, whatever may be its merit, since the Preface to it is already printed. Lord Melcombe called his Tusculum la Trappe.

"Love thy country, wish it well,
Not with too intense a care,
"Tis enough, that, when it fell,
Thou its ruin didst not share.

Envy's censure, Flattery's praise,
With unmov'd indifference view;
Learn to tread Life's dangerous maze,
With unerring Virtue's clue.

Void of strong desire and sear, Life's wide ocean trust no more; Strive thy little bark to steer With the tide, but near the shore.

Thus prepar'd, thy shorten'd sail
Shall, whene'er the winds increase,
Seizing each propitious gale,
Wast thee to the Port of Peace.

Keep thy conscience from offence,
And tempestuous passions free,
So, when thou art call'd from hence,
Easy shall thy passage be;

Eafy shall thy passage be, Chearful thy allotted stay, Short the account 'twixt God and thee; Hope shall meet thee on the way;

Truth shall lead thee to the gate,
Mercy's self shall let thee in,
Where its never-changing state
Full persection shall begin."

The Poem was accompanied by a Letter.

" La Trappe, the 27th Oct. 1761.

" Dear Sir,

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"You feemed to like the ode I fent you for your amusement; I now fend it you as a present. If you please to accept of it, and are willing that our friendif ship should be known when we are gone, you will be pleased to leave this among those of your own

papers that may possibly see the light by a possible mous publication. God send us health while we

" flay, and an eafy journey!

"Yours, most cordially,
"Melcombe."

In 1762, a fhort time before his death, Young published Resignation. Notwithstanding the manner in which it was really forced from him by the world, criticism has treated it with no common severity. If it shall be thought not to deserve the highest praise,

on the other fide of fourfcore, by whom, except by Newton and by Waller, has praife been merited?

To Mrs Montagu, the famous champion of Shakfpeare, I am indebted for the history of Resignation.
Observing that Mrs Boscawen, in the midst of hergrief for the loss of the admiral, derived consolation
from the perusal of the Night Thoughts, Mrs Montagu
proposed a visit to the author. From conversing with
Young Mrs Boscawen derived still surther consolation, and to that visit she and the world were indebted
for this poem. It compliments Mrs Montagu in the
following lines:

Yet, write I must. A Lady sues,
How shameful her request!
My brain in labour with dull rhyme,
Her's teeming with the best!

And again-

A friend you have, and I the fame,
Whose prudent soft address
Will bring to life those healing thoughts
Which died in your distress.

- That friend, the spirit of my theme
Extracting for your ease,
Will leave to me the dreg, in thoughts
Too common; such as these.

By the same Lady I am enabled to say, in her own words, that Young's unbounded genius appeared to greater advantage in the companion, than even in the author—that the christian was in him a character still more inspired, more enraptured, more sublime than the poet—and that, in his ordinary conversation,

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-letting down the golden chain from high, He drew his audience upward to the sky.

Notwithstanding Young had said, in his Conjectures on original Composition, that "blank verse is verse un"fallen, uncurst; verse reclaimed, reinthroned in
"the true language of the Gods"—notwithstanding he administered consolation to his own grief in this immortal language—Mrs Boscawen was comforted in rhyme.

While the poet and the christian were applying this comfort, Young had himself occasion for comfort, in consequence of the sudden death of Richardson, who was printing the former part of the poem. Of Richardson's death he says—

When heaven would kindly fet usfree, And earth's enchantment end;

It takes the most effectual means, And robs us of a friend.

To Resignation was prefixed an Apology for its appearance: to which more credit is due than to the generality of such apologies, from Young's unusual anxiety that no more productions of his old age should disgrace his former fame. In his will, dated February 1760, he desires of his executors, in a particular manner, that all his manuscript books and writings whatever might be burned, except his book of accounts.

In September 1764 he added a kind of codicil, wherein he made it his dying intreaty to his house-keeper, to whom he left 1000/. ' that all his manu-" scripts might be destroyed as soon as he was dead, "which would greatly oblige her deceased friend."

It may teach mankind the uncertainty of worldly friendships, to know that Young, either by surviving those he loved, or by out-living their affections, could only recollect the names of two friends, his house-

keeper

keeper and a hatter, to mention in his will; and it may ferve to repress that testamentary pride, which too often seeks for sounding names and titles, to be informed that the author of the Night Thoughts did not blush to leave a legacy to his "friend Henry Stevens, a hatter at the Temple-gate." Of these two remaining friends, one went before Young But, at eighty-four where" as he asks in The Centaur, "is "that world into which we were born?"

The same humility which marked a hatter and a housekeeper for the friends of the author of the Night I houghts, had before bestowed the same title on his sootman, in an epitaph in his Church-yard upon James Barker, dated 1740; which I am glad to

find in the late collection of his works.

Young and his housekeeper were ridiculed, with more ill-nature than wit, in a kind of novel published by Kidgell in 1755, called The Cord, under the names of Dr Elwes and Mrs Fusby.

In April 1765, at an age to which few attain, a pe-

riod was put to the life of Young.

He had performed no duty for the last three or four years of his life, but he retained his intellects to the last.

Much is told in the Biographia, which I know not to have been true, of the manner of his burial—of the master and children of a charity-school, which he founded in his parish, who neglected to attend their benefactor's corpse; and of a bell which was not caused to toll so often as upon those occasions bells usually toll. Had that humanity, which is here lavished upon things of little consequence either to the living or to the dead, been shewn in its proper place to the living, I should have had less to say about Lorenzo. They who lament that these missortunes happened to Young, forget the praise he bestows upon Socrates, in the Preface to Night Seven, for resenting his friend's request about his funeral.

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During some part of his life Young was abroad, but I have not been able to learn any particulars.

In his feventh Satire he fays,

When, after battle, I the field have feen Spread o'er with ghaftly shapes which once were men.

And it is known that from this or from some other field he once wandered into the enemy's camp, with a classic in his hand, which he was reading intently; and had some difficulty to prove that he was only an

absent poet and not a spy.

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The curious reader of Young's life will naturally inquire to what it was owing, that, though he lived almost forty years after he took Orders, which included one whole reign uncommonly long, and part of another, he was never thought worthy of the least preferment. The author of the Night Thoughts ended his days upon a Living which came to him from his College without any favour, and to which he probably had an eye when he determined on the Church. fatisfy curiofity of this kind is, at this distance of time, far from easy. The parties themselves know, not often, at the instant, why they are neglected, nor why they are preferred. The neglect of Young is by some ascribed to his having attached himself to the rince of Wales, and to his having preached an offensive fermon at St James's It has been told me, that he had two hundred a year in the late reign, by the patronage of Walpole; and that, whenever the King was reminded of Young, the only answer was, he has a pension. All the light thrown on this inquiry, by the following Letter from Secker, only ferves to shew at what a late period of life the author of the Night Thoughts solicited preferment.

" Deanry

" Deanry of St Paul's, July 8, 1758.

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" Good Dr Young,

"I have long wondered, that more fuitable notice of your great merit hath not been taken by perfons in power. But how to remedy the omiffion I fee not. No encouragement hath ever been given me to mention things of this nature to his Majefty. And therefore, in all likelihood, the only confequence of doing it would be weakening the little influence, which elfe I may possibly have on some other occasions. Your fortune and your reputation set you above the need of advancement; and your sentiments, above that concern for it, on your own account, which, on that of the Public, is since cerely felt by

"Your loving Brother,
"Thos. CANT."

At last, at the age of fourscore, he was appointed, in 1761, Clerk of the Closet to the Princess Dowager.

One obstacle must have stood not a little in the way of that preferment after which his whole life panted. Though he took Orders, he never entirely shook off Politics. He was always the Lion of his master Milton, parving to get free his hinder parts. By this conduct, if he gained some friends, he made many enemies.

Again, Young was a poet; and again, with reverence be it spoken, poets by profession do not always make the best clergymen. If the author of the Night Thoughts composed many sermons, he did not oblige the public with many.

Besides, in the latter part of life, Young was fond of holding himself out for a man retired from the world. But he seemed to have forgotten that the same verse which contains oblitus meorum, contains also

oblivifcendu

friendship and patronage is broken as effectually, when one goes beyond the length of it, as when the other does. To the vessel which is failing from the shore, it only appears that the shore also recedes; in life it is truly thus. He who retires from the world, will find himself, in reality, deserted as fast, if not faster, by the world. The public is not to be treated as the coxcomb treats his mistress—to be threatened with desertion, in order to increase fondness.

Young feems to have been taken at his word. Notwithstanding his frequent complaints of being neglected, no hand was reached out to pull him from that retirement of which he declared himself enamoured. Alexander assigned no palace for the residence of Diogenes, who boasted his surly satisfaction with

his tub.

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Of the domestic manners and petty habits of the author of the Night Thoughts, I hoped to have given you an account from the best authority;—but who shall dare to say, To-morrow I will be wife or virtuous, or to-morrow I will do a particular thing? Upon enquiring for his housekeeper, I learned that she was buried two days before I reached the town of her abode.

In a Letter from Tscharner, a noble foreigner, to Count Haller, Tscharner says, he has lately spent four days with Young at Welwyn, where the author tastes all the ease and pleasure mankind can defire. "Every "thing about him shews the man, each individual be- ing placed by rule. All is neat without art. He is "very pleasant in conversation, and extremely polite."

This, and more, may possibly be true; but Ischarner's was a first visit, a visit of curiosity and admira-

tion, and a vifit which the author expected.

Of Edward Young an anecdote which wanders among readers is not true, that he was Fielding's Parfon Adams. The original of that famous painting Vol. IV.

was William Young. He too was a clergyman. He fupported an uncomfortable existence by translating for the bookfellers from Greek; and, if he was not his own friend, was at least no man's enemy. Yet the facility with which this report has gained belief in the world, argues, were it not sufficiently known, that the author of the Night Thoughts bore some resemblance to Adams.

The attention Young bestowed upon the perusal of books is not unworthy imitation. When any passage pleased him, he appears to have folded down the least. On these passages he bestowed a second reading. But the labours of man are too frequently vain. Before he returned, a second time, to much of what he had once approved, he died. Many of his books, which I have seen, are by those notes of approbation so saled beyond their real bulk, that they will not shut.

What though we wade in wealth, or foar in fame! Earth's highest station ends in Here he lies! And dust to dust concludes her noblest song!

The author of these lines is not without his hic jacet.

By the good sense of his son, it contains none of that praise which no marble can make the bad or the foolish merit; which, without the direction of a stone or a turf, will find its way, sooner or later, to the deferving.

M. S.
Optimi parentis
EDWARDI YOUNG, LL. D.
Hujus Ecclefiæ rect.
Et Elizabethæ
fæm. prænob.
Conjugis ejus amantiffimæ
Pio & gratiffimo animo
Hoc marmor pofuit
F. Y.
Filius fuperstes.

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Is it not strange that the author of the Night Thoughts has inscribed no monument to the memory of his lamented wife? Yet what marble will endure

as long as the poems?

Lincoln's Inn.

Sept. 1780.

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Such, my good friend, is the account I have been able to collect of Young. That it may be long before any thing like what I have just transcribed be necessary for you, is the sincere wish of,

Dear Sir,

Your greatly obliged Friend, HERBERT CROFT, Jun.

P. S. This account of Young was feen by you in manufcript you know, Sir; and, though I could not prevail on you to make any alterations, you infifted on striking out one passage, only because it said, that, if I did not wish you to live long for your sake, I did for the sake of myself and of the world. But this post-script you will not see before it is printed; and I will say here, in spite of you, how I feel myself honoured and bettered by your friendship—and that, if I do credit to the church, after which I always longed, and for which I am now going to give in exchange the bar, tho gh not at so late a period of life as Young took Orders, it will be civing, in no small measure, to my having had the happiness of calling the author of The Rambler my friend.

Oxford, Sept. 1782. H. C."

OF Young's Poems it is difficult to give any general character; for he has no uniformity of manner: one of his pieces has no great refemblance to another. He began to write early and continued long; and at different times had different modes of poetical excellence in view. His numbers are fometimes fmooth,

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and fometimes rugged; his style is sometimes concatenated, and sometimes abrupt; sometimes diffusive, and sometimes concise. His plan seems to have started in his mind at the present moment, and his thoughts appear the effects of chance, sometimes adverse, and sometimes lucky, with very little operation of judgment.

He was not one of the writers whom experience improves, and who observing their own faults become gradually correct. His Poem on the Last Day, his first great performance, has an equability and propriety, which he afterwards either never endeavoured or never attained. Many paragraphs are noble, and sew are mean, yet the whole is languid; the plan is too much extended, and a succession of images divides and weakens the general conception; but the great reason why the reader is disappointed is, that the thought of the Last Day makes every man more than poetical, by spreading over his mind a general obscurity of sacred horror, that oppresses distinction, and disclains expression.

His story of Jane Grey was never popular. It is written with elegance enough, but Jane is too heroic

to be pitied.

The Universal Passion is indeed a very great performance. It is faid to be a feries of Epigrams: but if it be, it is what the author intended: his endeavour was at the production of striking distichs and pointed fentences; and his diffichs have the weight of folid fentiment, and his points the sharpness of resistless His characters are often felected with dif. cernment, and drawn with nicety; his illustrations are often happy, and his reflections often just. His species of fatire is between those of Horace and of Juvenal; he has the gaiety of Horace without his laxity of numbers, and the morality of Juvenal with greater variation of images. He plays, indeed, only on the furface of life; he never penetrates the recesses of the mind, and therefore the whole power of his poetry poetry is exhausted by a single perusal; his conceits

please only when they surprise.

To translate he never condescended, unless his Paraphrase on Job may be considered as a version; in which he has not, I think, been unsuccessful: he indeed favoured himself, by chusing those parts which most easily admit the ornaments of English poetry.

He had least success in his lyric attempts, in which he seems to have been under some malignant influence; he is always labouring to be great, and at last is only

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In his Night Thoughts he has exhibited a very wide display of original poetry, variegated with deep reflections and striking allusions, a wilderness of thought, in which the fertility of fancy scatters slowers of every hue and of every odour. This is one of the few poems in which blank verse could not be changed for rhyme but with disadvantage. The wild diffusion of the sentiments, and the digressive sallies of imagination, would have been compressed and restrained by confinement to rhyme. The excellence of this work is not exactness, but copiousness; particular lines are not to be regarded; the power is in the whole, and in the whole there is a magnificence like that ascribed to Chinese Plantation, the magnificence of vast extent and endless diversity.

His last poem was the Resignation; in which he made, as he was accustomed, an experiment of a new mode of writing, and succeeded better than in his Ocean or his Merchant. It was very falsely represented as a proof of decaying faculties. There is Young in every stanza, such as he often was in his highest

vigour.

His Tragedies not making part of the Collection, I had forgotten, till Mr Stevens recalled them to my thoughts by remarking, that he feemed to have one favourite catastrophe, as his three Plays all concluded with lavish suicide; a method by which, as Dryden re-

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marked,

marked, a poet easily rids his scene of persons whom he wants not to keep alive. In Busiris there are the greatest ebullitions of imagination; but the pride of Busiris is such as no other man can have, and the whole is too remote from known life to raise either grief, terror, or indignation. The Revenge approaches much nearer to human practices and manners, and therefore keeps possession of the stage: the first design seems suggested by Othello; but the reslections, the incidents, and the diction, are original. The moral observations are so introduced, and so expressed, as to have all the novelty that can be required. Of The Brothers I may be allowed to say nothing, since nothing was ever said of it by the Public.

It must be allowed of Young's poetry, that it abounds in thought, but without much accuracy or selection. When he lays hold of an illustration, he pursues it beyond expectation, sometimes happily, as in his parallel of Quicksilver with Pleasure, which I have heard repeated with approbation by a Lady, of whose praise he would have been justly proud, and which is very ingenious, very subtle, and almost exact; but sometimes he is less lucky, as when, in his Night Thoughts, having it dropped into his mind, that the orbs, stoating in space, might be called the cluster of Creation, he thinks on a cluster of grapes, and says, that they all hang on the great Vine, drinking

His conceits are fometimes yet less valuable; in the Last D, y, he hopes to illustrate the re-assembly of the atoms that compose the human body at the Trump of Doom, by the collection of bees into a swarm at the

the " nectareous juice of immortal Life."

tinkling of a pan.

The Prophet fays of Tyre, that her Merchants are Princes; Young fays of Tyre in his Merchant,

Her merchants Princes, and each deck a throne. Let burlefque try to go beyond him.

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He has the trick of joining the turgid and familiar: to buy the alliance of Britain, Climes were paid down. Antithesis is his favourite. They for kindness hate; and because she's right, she's ever in the wrong.

His verification is his own, neither his blank nor his rhyming lines have any refemblance to those of former writers: he picks up no hemistichs, he copies no favourite expressions; he seems to have laid up no stores of thought or diction, but to owe all to the fortuitous suggestions of the present moment. Yet I have reason to believe that, when once he had formed a new design, he then laboured it with very patient industry, and that he composed with great labour, and frequent revisions.

His verses are formed by no certain model; for he is no more like himself in his different productions than he is like others. He seems never to have studied prosody, nor to have had any direction but fromhis own ear. But, with all his defects, he was a man

of genius and a poet.

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MALLET.

OF DAVID MALLET, having no written memorial, I am able to give no other account than fuch as is supplied by the unauthorised loquacity of common same, and a very slight personal knowledge.

He was by his original one of the Macgregors, a clan that became, about fixty years ago, under the conduct of Robin Roy, so formidable and so infamous for violence and robbery, that the name was annulled by a legal abolition; and when they were all to denominate themselves anew, the father, I suppose, of this author called himself Malloch.

David Malloch was, by the penury of his parents, compelled to be Janitor of the High School at Edinburgh; a mean office, of which he did not afterwards delight to hear. But he furmounted the difadvantages of his birth and fortune; for when the Duke of Montrose applied to the College of Edinburgh for a tutor to educate his sons, Malloch was recommended; and I never heard that he dishonoured his credentials.

When his pupils were fent to fee the world, they were entrusted to his care; and having conducted them round the common circle of modish travels, he returned

returned with them to London, where, by the influence of the family in which he refided, he naturally gained admission to many persons of the highest rank, and the highest character, to wits, nobles, and statesmen.

Of his works, I know not whether I can trace the feries. His first production was William and Margaret *; of which, though it contains nothing very striking or difficult, he has been envied the reputation; and plagiarism has been boldly charged, but ne-

ver proved.

Not long afterwards he published the Excursion (1728); a defultory and capricious view of such scenes of Nature as his fancy led him, or his knowledge enabled him, to describe. It is not devoid of poetical spirit. Many of the images are striking, and many of the paragraphs are elegant. The cast of diction seems to be copied from Thomson, whose Seasons were then in their full blossom of reputation. He has Thomson's beauties and his faults.

His poem on Verbal Criticism (1733) was written to pay court to Pope, on a subject which he either did not understand or willingly misrepresented; and is little more than an improvement, or rather expansion, of a fragment which Pope printed in a Miscellany long before he engrafted it into a regular poem. There is in this piece more pertness than wit, and more considence than knowledge. The versisication is tolerable, nor can criticism allow it a higher praise.

His first tragedy was Eurydice, acted at Drury-Lane in 1731; of which I know not the reception nor the merit, but have heard it mentioned as a mean performance. He was not then too high to accept a Pro-

^{*} Mallet's William and Margaret was printed in Aaron Hill's Plain Dealer, N° 36, July 24, 1724. In its original flate it was very different from what it is in the last edition of his works.

logue and Epilogue from Aaron Hill, neither of which can be much commended.

Having cleared his tongue from his native pronunciation, so as to be no longer distinguished as a Scet, he seems inclined to disencumber himself from all adherences of his original, and took upon him to change his name from Scotch Malloch to English Mallet, without any imaginable reason of preference which the eye or ear can discover. What other proofs he gave of disrespect to his native country I know not; but it was remarked of him, that he was the only Scot whom Scotchmen did not commend.

About this time Pope, whom he visited familiarly, published his Essay on Man, but concealed the author; and when Mallet entered one day, Pope asked him slightly what there was new. Mallet told him, that the newest piece was something called an Essay on Man, which he had inspected idly; and seeing the utter inability of the author, who had neither skill in writing nor knowledge of his subject, had tossed it away. Pope, to punish his self-conceit, told him the

fecret.

A new edition of the works of Bacon being prepared (1740) for the prefs, Mallet was employed to prefix a Life, which he has written with elegance, perhaps with some aff ctation; but with so much more knowledge of history than of science, that when he afterwards undertook the Life of Marlborough, Warburton remarked, that he might perhaps forget that Mar borough was a general, as he had forgotten that Bacon was a philosopher.

When the Prince of Wales was driven from the palace, and, fetting himself at the head of the opposition, kept a separate Court, he endeavoured to increase his popularity by the patronage of literature, and made Mallet his under-secretary, with a salary of two hundred pounds a year: Thomson likewise had a pension; and they were associated in the composition

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bu hi of the Masque of Alfred, which in its original state was played at Cliefden in 1740; it was afterwards almost wholly changed by Mallet, and brought upon the stage at Drury-Lane in 1751, but with no great success.

Mallet, in a familiar conversation with Garrick, discoursing of the diligence which he was then exerting upon the Life of Mariborough, let him know that in the series of great men, quickly to be exhibited, he should find a nich for the hero of the theatre. Garrick professed to wonder by what artistice he could be introduced; but Mallet let him know, that, by a dexterous anticipation, he should fix him in a conspicuous place. "Mr Mallet," says Garrick, in his gratitude of exultation, "have you left off to write for "the stage?" Mallet then consessed that he had a drama in his hands. Garrick promised to act it; and

Aifred was produced.

The long retardation of the Life of the Duke of Marlborough shews, with strong conviction, how little confidence can be placed in posthumous renown. When he died, it was foon determined that his flory should be delivered to posterity; and the papers supposed to contain the necessary information were delivered to the lord Molesworth, who had been his favourite in Flanders. When Molesworth died, the fame papers were transferred with the fame defign to Sir Richard Steele, who in some of his exigences put them in pawn. They then remained with the old duchefs, who in her will affigned the task to Glover and Mallet, with a reward of a thousand pounds, and a prohibition to infert any verses. Glover rejected, I fuppose, with disdain the legacy, and devolved the whole work upon Mallet; who had from the late Duke of Marlborough a pension to promote his industry, and who talked of the discoveries which he made; but left not, when he died, any historical labours behind him.

While he was in the Prince's service he published Mustapha, with a Prologue by Thomson, not mean, but far inserior to that which he had received from Mallet for Agamemnan. The Epilogue, said to be written by a friend, was composed in haste by Mallet, in the place of one promised, which was never given. This tragedy was dedicated to the Prince his master. It was acted at Drury-Lane in 1739, and was well received, but was never revived.

In 1740, he produced, as has been already mentioned, the Masque of Alfred, in conjunction with

Thomson.

For some time afterwards he lay at rest. After a long interval, his next work was Amyntor and Theodora (1747), a long story in blank verse; in which it cannot be denied that there is copiousness and elegance of language, vigour of sentiment, and imagery well adapted to take possession of the fancy. But it is blank verse. This he sold to Vaillant for one hundred and twenty pounds. The first sale was not great, and it

is now lost in forgetfulness.

Mallet, by address or accident, perhaps by his dependance on the prince, found his way to Bolingbroke; a man whose pride and petulance made his kindness difficult to gain, or keep, and whom Mallet was content to court by an act, which, I hope, was unwillingly performed. When it was found that Pope had clandestinely printed an unauthorised number of the pamphlet called The Patriot King, Bolingbroke, in a fit of useless fury, resolved to blast his memory, and employed Mallet (1747) as the executioner of his vengeance. Mallet had not virtue, or had not spirit, to refuse the office; and was rewarded, not long after, with the legacy of lord Bolingbroke's works.

Many of the political pieces had been written during the opposition to Walpole, and given to Franklin, as he supposed, in perpetuity. These, among the rest, were claimed by the will. The question was re-

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ferred to arbitrators; but when they decided against Mallet, he refused to yield to the award; and by the help of Millar the bookseller published all that he could find, but with success very much below his expectation.

In 1753, his marque of Britannia was acted at Drury-Lane, and his tragedy of Elvira in 1763; in which year he was appointed keeper of the book of Entries

for ships in the port of London.

In the beginning of the last war, when the nation was exasperated by ill success, he was employed to turn the public vengeance upon Byng, and wrote a Letter of accusation under the character of a Plain Man. The paper was with great industry circulated and dispersed; and he, for his seasonable intervention, had a considerable pension bestowed upon him, which he retained to his death.

Towards the end of his life he went with his wife to France; but after a while, finding his health declining, he returned alone to England, and died in

April 1765.

He was twice married, and by his first wife had several children. One daughter, who married an Italian of rank named Cilesia, wrote a tragedy called Almida, which was acted at Drury-Lane. His second wife was the daughter of a nobleman's steward, who had a considerable fortune, which she took care to retain in her own hands.

His stature was diminutive, but he was regularly formed; his appearance, till he grew corpulent, was agreeable, and he suffered it to want no recommendation that dress could give it. His conversation was elegant and easy. The rest of his character may, without injury to his memory, fink into silence.

As a writer, he cannot be placed in any high class. There is no species of composition in which he was eminent. His Dramas had their day, a short day, and are forgotten: his blank verse seems to my ear Vol. IV.

as it is appended to Bacon's volumes, but is no longer mentioned. His works are such as a writer, buftling in the world, shewing himself in public, and emerging occasionally from time to time into notice, might keep alive by his personal influence; but which, conveying little information, and giving no great pleasure, must soon give way, as the succession of things produces new topics of conversation, and other modes of amuse-ment.

AKENSIDE.

AKENSIDE.

MARK AKENSIDE was born on the ninth of November, 1721, at Newcastle upon Tyne. His father, Mark, was a butcher of the Presbyterian sect; his mother's name was Mary Lumsden. He received the first part of his education at the grammar-school of Newcastle; and was afterwards instructed.

by Mr Wilson, who kept a private academy.

At the age of eighteen he was sent to Edinburgh, that he might qualify himself for the office of a differning minister, and received some affishance from the fund which the Differners employ in educating young men of scanty fortune. But a wider view of the world opened other scenes, and prompted other hopes: he determined to study physic, and repaid that contribution, which, being received for a different purpose, he justly thought it dishonourable to retain.

Whether, when he resolved not to be a dissenting minister, he ceased to be a Dissenter, I know not. He certainly retained an unnecessary and outrageous zeal for what he called and thought liberty; a zeal which sometimes disguises from the world, and not rarely from the mind which it possesses, an envious desire of Y 2 plundering

Plundering wealth or degrading greatness; and of which the immediate tendency is innovation and anarchy, an impetuous eagerness to subvert and confound,

with very little care what shall be established.

Akenside was one of those poets who have selt very early the motions of genius, and one of those students who have very early stored their memories with sentiments and images. Many of his performances were produced in his youth; and his greatest work, The Pleasures of Imagination, appeared in 1744. I have heard Dodsley, by whom it was published, relate, that when the copy was offered him, the price demanded for it, which was an hundred and twenty pounds, being such as he was not inclined to give precipitately, he carried the work to Pope, who, having looked into it, advised him not to make a niggardly offer; for this was no every-day writer.

In 1741 he went to Leyden, in pursuit of medical knowledge; and three years afterwards (May 16, 1744) became doctor of physic, having, according to the sustom of the Dutch Universities, published a thesis, or differtation. The subject which he chose was the Original and Growth of the Human Fætus; in which he is said to have departed, with great judgment, from the opinion then established, and to have delivered that which has been since confirmed and re-

ceived.

Akenside was a young man, warm with every notion that by nature or accident had been connected with the sound of liberty, and by an excentricity which such dispositions do not easily avoid, a lover of contradiction, and no friend to any thing established. He adopted Shaftesbury's foolish assertion of the essicacy of ridicule for the discovery of truth. For this he was attacked by Warburton, and defended by Dyson: Warburton afterwards reprinted his remarks at the end of his dedication to the Freethinkers.

The refult of all the arguments which have been produced

produced in a long and eager discussion of this idle question, may easily be collected. If ridicule be applied to any position as the test of truth, it will then become a question whether such ridicule be just; and this can only be decided by the application of truth, as the test of ridicule. Two men, fearing, one a real and the other a fancied danger, will be for a while equally exposed to the inevitable consequences of cowardice, contemptuous censure, and ludicrous representation; and the true state of both cases must be known, before it can be decided whose terror is rational, and whose is ridiculous; who is to be pitied, and who to be despised. Both are for a while equally exposed to laughter, but both are not therefore equally contemptible.

In the revifal of his poem, which he died before he had finished, he omitted the lines which had given

occasion to Warburton's objections.

He published, soon after his return from Leyden (1745), his first collection of odes; and was impelled by his rage of patriotism to write a very acrimonious epistle to Pulteney, whom he stigmatizes, under the name of Curio, as the betrayer of his country.

Being now to live by his profession, he first commenced physician at Northampton, where Dr Stonhouse then practifed, with such reputation and success, that a stranger was not likely to gain ground upon him. Akenside tried the contest a while; and, having deafened the place with clamours for liberty, removed to Hampstead, where he resided more than two years, and then fixed himself in London, the proper place for a man of accomplishments like his.

At London he was known as a poet, but was still to make his way as a physician; and would perhaps have been reduced to great exigencies, but that Mr Dyson, with an ardour of friendship that has not many examples, allowed him three hundred pounds a year. Thus supported, he advanced gradually in me-

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dical reputation, but never attained any great extent of practice, or eminence of popularity. A physician in a great city seems to be the mere play-thing of Fortune; his degree of reputation is, for the most part, totally casual: they that employ him, know not his excellence; they that reject him, know not his deficience. By an acute observer, who had looked on the transactions of the medical world for half a century, a very curious book might be written on the For-

tune of Physicians.

Akenside appears not to have been wanting to his own success: he placed himself in view by all the common methods; he became a Fellow of the Royal Society; he obtained a degree at Cambridge, and was admitted into the College of Physicians; he wrote little poetry, but published, from time to time, medical essays and observations; he became physician to St Thomas's Hospital; he read the Gulstonian Lectures in Anatomy; but began to give, for the Crounian Lecture, a history of the revival of Learning, from which he soon desisted; and, in conversation, he very eagerly forced himself into notice by an ambitious of stentation of elegance and literature.

His Discourse on the Dysentery (1764) was confidered as a very conspicuous specimen of Latinity, which entitled him to the same height of place among the scholars as he possessed before among the wits; and he might perhaps have risen to a greater elevation of character, but that his studies were ended with his life, by a putrid sever, June 23, 1770, in

the forty-ninth year of his age.

AKENSIDE is to be confidered as a didactic and lyric poet. His great work is the Pleasures of Imagination; a performance which, published, as it was, at the age of twenty-three, raised expectations that were not afterwards very amply satisfied. It has undoubtedly a just claim to very particular notice, as an example

ample of great felicity of genius, and uncommon amplitude of acquifitions, of a young mind stored with images, and much exercised in combining and com-

paring them.

laid hold on nothing.

With the philosophical or religious tenets of the author I have nothing to do; my business is with his poetry. The subject is well-chosen, as it includes all images that can strike or please, and thus comprises every species of poetical delight. The only difficulty is in the choice of examples and illustrations, and it is not easy in such exuberance of matter to find the middle point between penury and satiety. The parts seem artificially disposed, with sufficient coherence, so as that they cannot change their places without injury to the general design.

His images are displayed with such luxuriance of expression, that they are hidden, like Butler's Moon, by a Veil of Light; they are forms fantastically lost under superstainty of dress. Pars minima est ipsa Puella sin. The words are multiplied till the sense is hardly perceived; attention deserts the mind, and settles in the ear. The reader wanders through the gay dissuming, sometimes amazed, and sometimes delighted; but, after many turnings in the slowery labyrinth, comes out as he went in. He remarked little, and

To his verification justice requires that praise should not be denied. In the general fabrication of his lines he is perhaps superior to any other writer of blank verse; his slow is smooth, and his pauses are musical; but the concatenation of his verses is commonly too long continued, and the full close does not recur with sufficient frequency. The sense is carried on through a long intertexture of complicated clauses, and as nothing is distinguished, nothing is remembered.

The exemption which blank verse affords from the necessity of closing the sense with the couplet, betrays luxuriant and active minds into such self-indulgence,

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nament, and are not easily persuaded to close the sense at all. Blank verse will therefore, I fear, be too often found in description exuberant, in argument loquaci-

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ous, and in narration tirefome.

His diction is certainly poetical as it is not profaic, and elegant as it is not vulgar. He is to be commended as having fewer artifices of difgust than most of his brethren of the blank song. He rarely either recals old phrases or twists his metre into harsh inversions. The sense however of his words is strained; when he views the Ganges from Alpine heights; that is, from mountains like the Alps. And the pedant surely intrudes, but when was blank verse without pedantry? when he tells how Planets absolve the stated round of Time.

It is generally known to the readers of poetry that he intended to revise and augment this work, but died before he had completed his design. The reformed work as he left it, and the additions which he had made, are very properly retained in the late collection. He seems to have somewhat contracted his diffusion; but I know not whether he has gained in closeness what he has lost in splendour. In the ad-

ditional book, the Tale of Solon, is too long.

One great defect of his poem is very properly cenfured by Mr Walker, unless it may be said in his defence, that what he has omitted was not properly in
his plan. "His picture of man is grand and beauti"ful, but unfinished. The immortality of the soul,
"which is the natural consequence of the appetites
"and powers she is invested with, is scarcely once
hinted throughout the poem. This deficiency is
"amply supplied by the masterly pencil of Dr Young;
"who, like a good philosopher, has invincibly proved
the immortality of man, from the grandeur of his
"conceptions, and the meanness and misery of his
"state; for this reason, a few passages are selected
"from

from the Night Thoughts, which, with those from Akenside, seem to form a complete view of the powers, situation, and end of man." Exercises for

Improvement in Elecution, p. 66.

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His other poems are now to be confidered; but a short consideration will dispatch them. It is not easy to guess why he addicted himself so diligently to lyric poetry, having neither the ease and airiness of the lighter, nor the vehemence and elevation of the grander ode. When he lays his ill-sated hand upon his harp, his former powers seem to desert him; he has no longer his luxuriance of expression, nor variety of images. His thoughts are cold, and his words in elegant. Yet such was his love of lyrics, that, having written with great vigour and poignancy his Epistle to Curio, he transformed it afterwards into an ode disgraceful only to its author.

Of his odes nothing favourable can be faid; the fentiments commonly want force, nature, or novelty; the diction is fometimes harsh and uncouth, the stanzas ill-constructed and unpleasant, and the rhymes dissonant, or unskilfully disposed, too distant from each other, or arranged with too little regard to established use, and therefore perplexing to the ear, which in a short composition has not time to grow familiar

with an innovation.

To examine fuch compositions singly, cannot be required; they have doubtless brighter and darker parts: but when they are once found to be generally dull, all further labour may be spared; for to what use can the work be criticised that will not be read?

HOMAS GRAY, the fon of Mr Philip Gray, a scrivener of London, was born in Cornhill, November 26, 1716. His grammatical education he received at Eton under the care of Mr Antrobus, his mother's brother, then affistant to Dr George; and when he left school, in 1734, entered a pensioner at

Peterhouse in Cambridge.

The transition from the school to the college is, to most young scholars, the time from which they date their years of manhood, liberty, and happiness; but Gray feems to have been very little delighted with academical gratifications; he liked at Cambridge neither the mode of life nor the fashion of study, and lived fullenly on to the time when his attendance on lectures was no longer required. As he intended to profess the Common Law, he took no degree.

When he had been at Cambridge about five years, Mr Horace Walpole, whose friendship he had gained at Eton, invited him to travel with him as his com-They wandered through France into Italy; and Gray's Letters contain a very pleafing account of many parts of their journey. But unequal friendthips are eafily diffolved: at Florence they quarrelled,

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and parted; and Mr Walpole is now content to have it told that it was by his fault. If we look however without prejudice on the world, we shall find that men, whose consciousness of their own merit sets them above the compliances of servility, are apt enough in their association with superiors to watch their own dignity with troublesome and punctilious jealously, and in the servour of independence to exact that attention which they resuse to pay. Part they did, whatever was the quarrel, and the rest of their travels was doubtless more unpleasant to them both. Gray continued his journey in a manner suitable to his own little fortune, with only an occasional servant.

He returned to England in September 1741, and in about two months afterwards buried his father; who had, by an injudicious waste of money upon a new house, so much lessened his fortune, that Gray thought himself too poor to study the law. He therefore retired to Cambridge, where he soon after became Bachelor of Civil Law; and where, without liking the place or its inhabitants, or professing to like them, he passed, except a short residence at London, the rest

of his life.

About this time he was deprived of Mr West, the son of a chancellor of Ireland, a friend on whom he appears to have set a high value, and who deserved his esteem by the powers which he shews in his Letters, and in the Ode to May, which Mr Mason has preserved, as well as by the sincerity with which, when Gray sent him part of Agrippina, a tragedy that he had just begun, he gave an opinion which probably intercepted the progress of the work, and which the judgment of every reader will confirm. It was certainly no loss to the English stage that Agrippina was never sinished.

In this year (1742) Gray seems first to have applied himself seriously to poetry; for in this year were produced the Ode to Spring, his Prospect of Eton, and

his Ode to Adversity. He began likewise a Latin poem,

de Principiis cogitandi.

It may be collected from the narrative of Mr Mason, that his first ambition was to have excelled in Latin poetry: perhaps it were reasonable to wish that he had prosecuted his design; for though there is at present some embarrassiment in his phrase, and some harshness in his Lyric numbers, his copiousness of language is such as very sew posses; and his lines, even when imperfect, discover a writer whom practice would quickly have made skilful.

He now lived on at Peterhouse, very little solicitous what others did or thought, and cultivated his mind and enlarged his views without any other purpose than of improving and amusing himself; when Mr Mason, being elected fellow of Pembroke-hall, brought him a companion who was afterwards to be his editor, and whose fondness and sidelity has kindled in him a zeal of admiration, which cannot be reasonably expected from the neutrality of a stranger, and the coldness of a critic.

In this retirement he wrote (1747) an ode on the Death of Mr Walpole's Cat; and the year afterwards attempted a poem of more importance, on Government and Education, of which the fragments which remain have many excellent lines.

His next production (1750) was his far-famed Elegy in the Church-yard, which, finding its way into a Magazine, first, I believe, made him known to the public.

An invitation from lady Cobham about this time gave occasion to an odd composition called a Long

Story, which adds little to Gray's character.

Several of his pieces were published (1753), with defigns, by Mr Bentley; and that they might in some form or other make a book, only one side of each leaf was printed. I believe the poems and the plates recommended each other so well, that the whole impression was soon bought. This year he lost his mother.

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Some time afterwards (1756) some young men of the college, whose chambers were near his, diverted themselves with disturbing him by frequent and troublesome noises, and, as is said, by pranks yet more offensive and contemptuous. This insolence, having endured it a while, he represented to the governors of the society, among whom perhaps he had no friends; and, finding his complaint little regarded, removed himself to Pembroke-hall.

In 1757 he published The Progress of Poetry and The Bard, two compositions at which the readers of poetry were at first content to gaze in mute amazement. Some that tried them confessed their inability to understand them, though Warburton said that they were understood as well as the works of Milton and Shakspeare, which it is the fashion to admire. Garrick wrote a few lines in their praise. Some hardy champions undertook to rescue them from neglect, and in a short time many were content to be shewn beauties which they could not see.

Gray's reputation was now fo high, that after the death of Cibber, he had the honour of refusing the laurel, which was then bestowed on Mr Whitehead.

His curiofity, not long after, drew him away from Cambridge to a lodging near the Museum, where he resided near three years, reading and transcribing; and, so far as can be discovered, very little affected by two odes on Oblivion and Obscurity, in which his lyric performances were ridiculed with nuch contempt and much ingenuity.

When the Professor of Modern History at Cambridge died, he was, as he says, cockered and spirited up, till he asked it of lord Bute, who sent him a civil refusal; and the place was given to Mr Brocket, the tutor of Sir James Lowther.

His constitution was weak, and believing that his health was promoted by exercise and change of place, he undertook (1765) a journey into Scotland, of Vol. IV.

which his account, so far as it extends, is very curious and elegant; for as his comprehension was ample, his curiosity extended to all the works of art, all the appearances of nature, and all the monuments of past events. He naturally contracted a friendship with Dr Beattie, whom he found a poet, a philosopher, and a good man. The Mareschal College at Aberdeen offered him the degree of Doctor of Laws, which, having omitted to take it at Cambridge, he thought it decent to resuse.

What he had formerly folicited in vain, was at last given him without folicitation. The Professorship of History became again vacant, and he received (1768) an offer of it from the duke of Grafton. He accepted, and retained it to his death; always designing lectures, but never reading them; uneasy at his neglest of duty, and appeasing his uneasiness with designs of reformation, and with a resolution which he believed himself to have made of resigning the office, if he found himself unable to discharge it.

Ill health made another journey necessary, and he vifited (1769) Westmoreland and Cumberland. He that reads his epistolary narration wishes, that to travel, and to tell his travels, had been more of his employment; but it is by studying at home that we must obtain the ability of travelling with intelligence and improvement.

The gout, of which he had sustained many weak attacks, fell upon his stomach, and yielding to no medicines, produced strong convulsions, which (July 30,

1771) terminated in death.

His character I am willing to adopt, as Mr Malon has done, from a Letter written to my friend Mr Boswell, by the Rev. Mr Temple, rector of St Gluvias in Cornwall; and am as willing as his warmest well-wisher to believe it true.

"Perhaps he was the most learned man in Europe.
"He was equally acquainted with the elegant and pro"found

" found parts of science, and that not superficially but thoroughly. He knew every branch of history, "both natural and civil; had read all the original " historians of England, France, and Italy; and was "a great antiquarian. Criticism, metaphysics, mo-"rals, politics, made a principal part of his study; "voyages and travels of all forts were his favourite " amusements; and he had a fine taste in painting, " prints, architecture, and gardening. With fuch a "fund of knowledge, his conversation must have been " equally instructing and entertaining; but he was " also a good man, a man of virtue and humanity. "There is no character without some speck, some im-" perfection; and I think the greatest defect in his was an aifectation in delicacy, or rather effeminacy, ss and a visible fastidiousness; or contempt and disdain of his inferiors in science. He also had, in some " degree, that weakness which disgusted Voltaire so " much in Mr Congreve: though he feemed to value others chiefly according to the progress they had " made in knowledge, yet he could not bear to be confidered himself merely as a man of letters; and " though without birth, or fortune, or station, his de-" fire was to be looked upon as a private independent gentleman, who read for his amusement. Perhaps "it may be faid, What fignifies fo much knowledge, "when it produced fo little? Is it worth taking fo " much pains to leave no memorial but a few poems? "But let it be confidered that Mr Gray was, to o-" thers, at least innocently employed; to himself, cer-" tainly beneficially. His time passed agreeably; he "was every day making fome new acquifition in " science; his mind was enlarged, his heart softened, 66 his virtue strengthened; the world and mankind "were shewn to him without a mask; and he was "taught to confider every thing as trifling, and un-"worthy of the attention of a wife man, except the Z 2 " pursuit

" pursuit of knowledge and practice of virtue, in that

" state wherein God hath placed us."

To this character Mr Mason has added a more particular account of Gray's skill in zoology. He has remarked, that Gray's esseminacy was affected most before those whom he did not wish to please; and that he is unjustly charged with making knowledge his sole reason of preference, as he paid his esteem to none whom

he did not likewise believe to be good.

What has occurred to me, from the flight inspection of his Letters in which my undertaking has engaged me, is, that his mind had a large grasp; that his curiosity was unlimited, and his judgment cultivated; that he was a man likely to love much where he loved at all, but that he was sassidious and hard to please. His contempt however is often employed, where I hope it will be approved, upon scepticism and insidelity. His short account of Shaftesbury I will insert.

"You fay you cannot conceive how lord Shaftefbury came to be a philosopher in vogue; I will tell

"you: nrit, he was a lord; fecondly, he was as vain as any of his readers; thirdly, men are very prone

to believe what they do not understand; fourthly,

"they will believe any thing at all, provided they are under no obligation to believe it; fifthly, they

love to take a new road, even when that road leads no where; fixthly, he was reckoned a fine writer,

and feems always to mean more than he faid.

"Would you have any more reasons? An interval of above forty years has pretty well destroyed the

charm. A dead lord ranks with commoners: va-

" nity is no longer interested in the matter; for a new

" road is become an old one."

Mr Mason has added, from his own knowledge, that though Gray was poor, he was not eager of money; and that, out of the little that he had, he was very willing to help the necessitous.

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As a writer he had this peculiarity, that he did not write his pieces first rudely, and then correct them, but laboured every line as it arose in the train of composition; and he had a notion not very peculiar, that he could not write but at certain times, or at happy moments; a fantastic soppery to which my kindness for a man of learning and of virtue wishes him to have been superior.

GRAY's Poetry is now to be confidered; and I hope not to be looked on as an enemy to his name, if I confess that I contemplate it with less pleasure than his life.

His ode on Spring has fomething poetical, both in the language and the thought; but the language is too luxuriant, and the thoughts have nothing new. There has of late arisen a practice of giving to adjectives, derived from substantives, the termination of participles; such as the cultured plain the defied bank; but I was forry to see, in the lines of a scholar like Gray, the bonied Spring. The morality is natural, but too stale; the conclusion is pretty.

The poem on the Cat was doubtless by its author considered as a trifle, but it is not a happy trifle. In the first stanza the azure flowers that blow, show resolutely a rhyme is sometimes made when it cannot easily be found. Selima, the Cat, is called a nymph, with some violence both to language and sense; but there is good use made of it when it is done; for of the two lines.

What female heart can gold despise?

the first relates merely to the nymph, and the second only to the cat. The fixth stanza contains a melancholy truth that a favourite has no friend; but the last ends in a pointed sentence of no relation to the purpose; if what glistered had been gold. the cat would not have gone into the water; and if she had, would not less have been drowned.

The Prospect of Eton College suggests nothing to Gray, which every beholder does not equally think and feel. His supplication to father Thames, to tell him who drives the hoop or tosses the ball, is useless and puerile Father Thames has no better means of knowing than himself. His epithet buxom health is not elegant; he seems not to understand the word. Gray thought his language more poetical, as it was more remote from common use: sinding in Dryden honey redolent of Spring, an expression that reaches the utmost limits of our language, Gray drove it a little more beyond common apprehension, by making gales to be redolent of joy and youth.

from O Diva, gratum qua regis Antium; but Gray has excelled his original by the variety of his fentiments, and by their moral application. Of this piece, at once poetical and rational, I will not by flight objections

violate the dignity.

My process has now brought me to the wonderful Wonder of Wonders, the two Sister Odes; by which, though either vulgar ignorance or common sense at first universally rejected them, many have been since persuaded to think themselves delighted. I am one of those that are willing to be pleased, and therefore would gladly find the meaning of the first stanza of the Progress of Poetry.

Gray seems in his rapture to confound the images of spreading found and running water. A stream of music may be allowed; but where does Music, however smooth and strong, after having visited the verdant vales,

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groves rebellow to the roar? If this be faid of Music, it is nonfense; if it be faid of Water, it is nothing to the purpose.

The fecond stanza, exhibiting Mars's car and Jove's eagle, is unworthy of further notice. Criticism difdains to chase a school-boy to his common places.

To the third it may likewise be objected, that it is drawn from Mythology, though such as may be more easily assimilated to real life. Idalia's velvet-green has something of cant. An epithet or metaphor drawn from Nature ennobles Art; an epithet or metaphor drawn from Art degrades Nature. Gray is too fond of words arbitrarily compounded. Many-twinkling was formerly censured as not analogical; we may say many-spotted, but scarcely many-spotting. This stanza, however, has something pleasing.

Of the second ternary of stanzas, the first endeavours to tell something, and would have told it, had it not been crossed by Hyperion: the second describes well enough the universal prevalence of Poetry; but I am asraid that the conclusion will not rise from the premises. The caverns of the North and the plains of Chili are not the residences of Glory and generous Shame. But that Poetry and Virtue go always together is an opinion so pleasing, that I can forgive him who resolves to think it true.

The third stanza sounds big with Delphi, and Egean, and Ilissue, and Meander, and hallowed sountain and solemn sound; but in all Gray's odes there is a kind of cumbrous splendour which we wish away. His position is at last salse: in the time of Dante and Petrarch, from whom he derives our first school of Poetry, Italy was over-run by tyrant power and coward vice; nor was our state much better when we first borrowed the Italian arts.

Of the third ternary, the first gives a mythological birth of Shakspeare. What is said of that mighty genius

genius is true; but it is not faid happily; the real effects of this poetical power are put out of fight by the pomp of machinery. Where truth is sufficient to fill the mind, fiction is worse than useless; the counterfeit debases the genuine.

His account of Milton's blindness, if we suppose it caused by study in the formation of his poem, a supposition furely allowable, is poetically true, and happily imagined. But the car of Dryden, with his true courfers, has nothing in it peculiar; it is a car in which

any other rider may be placed.

The Bard appears, at the first view, to be, as Algarotti and others have remarked, an imitation of the prophecy of Nereus. Algarotti thinks it superior to its original, and, if preference depends only on the imagery and animation of the two poems, his judgment is right. There is in The Bard more force, more thought, and more variety. But to copy is less than to invent, and the copy has been unhappily produced at a wrong time. The fiction of Horace was to the Romans credible; but its revival difgusts us with apparent and unconquerable fallehood. Incredulus odi.

To felect a fingular event, and swell it to a giant's bulk by fabulous appendages of spectres and predictions, has little difficulty, for he that forfakes the probable may always find the marvellous. And it has little use; we are affected only as we believe; we are improved only as we find fomething to be imitated or declined. I do not fee that The Bard promotes any

truth, moral or political.

His stanzas are too long, especially his epodes; the ode is finished before the ear has learned its measures, and confequently before it can receive pleasure from their confonance and recurrence.

Of the first stanza the abrupt beginning has been celebrated; but technical beauties can give praise only to the inventor. It is in the power of any man to rush abruptly

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ex pe abruptly upon his subject, that has read the ballad of Johnny Armstrong.

Is there ever a man in all Scotland-

The initial refemblances, or alliterations, ruin, ruthlefs, helm or hauberk, are below the grandeur of a poem

that endeavours at fublimity.

In the fecond stanza the Bard is well described; but in the third we have the puerilities of obsolete mythology. When we are told that Cadwallo bush'd the stormy main, and that Modred made buse Plintimmon bow his cloud top'd head, attention recoils from the repetition of a tale that, even when it was first heard, was heard with scorn.

The weaving of the winding sheet he borrowed, as he owns, from the northern Bards; but their texture, however, was very properly the work of semale powers, as the art of spinning the thread of life in another mythology. Thest is always dangerous; Gray has made weavers of his slaughtered bards, by a siction outrageous and incongruous. They are then called upon to Weave the warp, and weave the woof, perhaps with no great propriety; for it is by crossing the woof with the warp that men weave the web or piece; and the sirst line was dearly bought by the admission of its wretched correspondent, Give ample room and verge enough. He has, however, no other line as bad.

The third stanza of the second ternary is commended, I think, beyond its merit. The personification is indistinct. Thirst and Hunger are not alike; and their seatures, to make the imagery persect, should have been discriminated. We are told, in the same stanza, how towers are sed. But I will no longer look for particular saults; yet let it be observed, that the ode might have been concluded with an action of better example; but suicide is always to be had, without expence of thought.

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These odes are marked by glittering accumulations of ungraceful ornaments; they strike, rather than please; the images are magnified by affectation; the language is laboured into harshness. The mind of the writer seems to work with unnatural violence, Double, double, toil and trouble. He has a kind of strutting dignity, and is tall by walking on tiptoe. His art and his struggle are too visible, and there is too little appearance of ease and nature.

To fay that he has no beauties, would be unjust: a man like him, of great learning and great industry, could not but produce something valuable. When he pleases least, it can only be said that a good design was

ill directed.

His translations of Northern and Welsh Poetry deserve praise: the imagery is preserved, perhaps often improved; but the language is unlike the language

of other poets.

In the character of his Elegy I rejoice to concur with the common reader; for by the common sense of readers uncorrupted with literary prejudices, after all the refinements of subtilty and the dogmatism of learning, must be finally decided all claim to poetical honours. The Church-yard abounds with images which find a mirrour in every mind, and with sentiments to which every bosom returns an echo. The sour stanzas beginning Yet even these bones, are to me original: I have never seen the notions in any other place; yet he that reads them here, persuades himself that he has always selt them. Had Gray written often thus, it had been vain to blame, and useless to praise him.

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LYTTELTON.

GEORGE LYTTELTON, the fon of Sir Thomas Lyttelton of Hagley in Worcestershire, was born in 1709. He was educated at Eton, where he was so much distinguished, that his exercises were recommended as models to his school-fellows.

From Eton he went to Christ-church, where he retained the same reputation of superiority, and displayed his abilities to the public in a poem on Blen-

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He was a very early writer, both in verse and prose. His Progress of Love, and his Persian Letters, were both written when he was very young; and, indeed, the character of a young man is very visible in both. The Verses cant of shepherds and slocks, and crooks dressed with flowers; and the Letters have something of that indistinct and headstrong ardour for liberty which a man of genius always catches when he enters the world, and always suffers to cool as he passes soward.

He staid not long at Oxford; for in 1728 he began his travels, and saw France and Italy. When he returned, he obtained a seat in parliament, and soon distringuished

flinguished himself among the most eager opponents of Sir Robert Walpole, though his father, who was Commissioner of the Admiralty, always voted with the Court.

For many years the name of George Lyttleton was feen in every account of every debate in the House of He opposed the standing army; he opposed the excise; he supported the motion for petitioning the King to remove Walpole. His zeal was confidered by the courtiers not only as violent, but as acrimonious and malignant; and when Walpole was at last hunted from his places, every effort was made by his friends, and many friends he had, to exclude

Lyttelton from the Secret Committee.

The Prince of Wales, being (1737) driven from St James's, kept a separate court, and opened his arms to the opponents of the ministry. Mr Lyttelton became his fecretary, and was supposed to have great influence in the direction of his conduct. fuaded his mafter, whose business it was now to be popular, that he would advance his character by patron-Mallet was made under-fecretary, with 200%. and Thomson had a pension of 1001 a year. For Thomson Lyttelton always retained his kindness, and was able at last to place him at ease.

Moore courted his favour by an apologetical poem, called The Trial of Selim, for which he was paid with kind words, which, as is common, raifed great hopes,

that at last were disappointed.

Lyttelton now stood in the first rank of opposition; and Pope, who was incited, it is not easy to say how, to increase the clamour against the ministry, commended him among the other patriots. This drew upon him the reproaches of Fox, who, in the house, imputed to him as a crime his intimacy with a lampooner fo unjust and licentious. Lyttelton supported his friend, and replied, that he thought it an honour to be received into the familiarity of fo great a poet. While

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" pl " cl V While he was thus conspicuous, he married (1741) Miss Lucy Fortescue of Devonshire, by whom he had a son, the late lord Lyttelton, and two daughters, and with whom he appears to have lived in the highest degree of connubial felicity: but human pleasures are short; she died in childbed about five years afterwards, and he solaced his grief by writing a long poem to her memory.

He did not however condemn himself to perpetual solitude and sorrow; for, after a while, he was content to seek happiness again by a second marriage with the daughter of Sir Robert Rich; but the expe-

riment was unfuccessful.

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At length, after a long struggle, Walpole gave way, and honour and profit were distributed among his conquerors. Lyttelton was made (1744) one of the Lords of the Treasury; and from that time was engaged in supporting the schemes of the ministry.

Politics did not, however, so much engage him as to withhold his thoughts from things of more importance. He had, in the pride of juvenile considence, with the help of corrupt conversation, entertained doubts of the truth of Christianity; but he thought the time now come when it was no longer sit to doubt or believe by chance, and applied himself seriously to the great question. His studies, being honest, ended in conviction. He found that religion was true, and what he had learned he endeavoured to teach (1747), by Observations on the Conversion of St Paul; a treatise to which insidelity has never been able to sabricate a specious answer. This book his father had the happiness of seeing, and expressed his pleasure in a letter which deserves to be inserted.

[&]quot;I have read your religious treatife with infinite pleasure and satisfaction. The style is fine and clear, the arguments close, cogent, and irresistible. You. IV.

A a "May

"May the King of kings, whose glorious cause you have so well defended, reward your pious labours,

" and grant that I may be found worthy, through the

"merits of Jesus Christ, to be an eye-witness of that happiness which I don't doubt he will bountifully

" bestow upon you. In the mean time, I shall never

"cease glorifying God, for having endowed you with fuch useful talents, and giving me so good a son.

"Your affectionate father,

"THOMAS LYTTELTON."

A few years afterwards (1751), by the death of his father, he inherited a baronet's title with a large eaftate, which, though perhaps he did not augment, he was careful to adorn, by a house of great elegance and expence, and by much attention to the decoration of his park.

As he continued his activity in parliament, he was gradually advancing his claim to profit and preferment; and accordingly was made in time (1754) cofferer and privy counfellor: this place he exchanged next year for the great office of chancellor of the Exchequer; an office, however, that required fome qualifications which he foon perceived himself to want.

The year after, his curiofity led him into Wales: of which he has given an account, perhaps rather with too much affectation of delight, to Archibald Bower, a man of whom he had conceived an opinion more favourable than he feems to have deferved, and whom, having once espoused his interest and same, he never was persuaded to disown. Bower, whatever was his moral character, did not want abilities; attacked as he was by an universal outcry, and that outcry, as it seems, the echo of truth, he kept his ground; at last, when his defences began to fail him, he sallied out upon his adversaries, and his adversaries retreated.

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About this time Lyttelton published his Dialogues of the Dead, which were very eagerly read, though the production rather, as it seems, of leisure than of study, rather essuable than compositions. The names of his persons too often enable the reader to anticipate their conversation; and when they have met, they too often part without any conclusion. He has copied Fenelon more than Fontenelle-

When they were first published, they were kindly commended by the Gritical Reviewers; and poor Lyttelton, with humble gratitude, returned, in a note which I have read, acknowledgments which can never be proper, since they must be paid either for slat-

tery or for justice.

When, in the latter part of the last reign, the inauspicious commencement of the war made the dissolution of the ministry unavoidable, Sir George Lyttelton, losing with the rest his employment, was recompensed with a peerage; and rested from political turbulence in the House of Lords.

His last literary production was his History of Henry the Second, elaborated by the searches and deliberations of twenty years, and published with such anxiety as

only vanity can dictate.

The story of this publication is remarkable. The whole work was printed twice over, a great part of it three times, and many sheets four or five times. The booksellers paid for the first impression; but the charges and repeated operations of the press were at the expence of the author, whose ambitious accuracy is known to have cost him at least a thousand pounds. He began to print in 1755. Three volumes appeared in 1764, a second edition of them in 1767, a third edition in 1768, and the conclusion in 1771.

Andrew Reid, a man not without confiderable abilities, and not unacquainted with letters or with life, undertook to perfuade Lyttelton, as he had perfuaded

A a 2 himfelf,

himself, that he was master of the secret of punctuation; and, as fear begets credulity, he was employed, I know not at what price, to point the pages of *Henry* the Second. The book was at last pointed and printed, and sent into the world. Lyttelton took money for his copy, of which, when he had paid the *Pointer*, he probably gave the rest away; for he was very libe-

ral to the indigent.

When time brought the History to a third edition, Reid was either dead or discarded; and the superintendence of typography and punctuation was committed to a man originally a comb-maker, but then known by the style of Doctor. Something uncommon was probably expected, and something uncommon was at last done; for to the Doctor's edition is appended, what the world had hardly seen before, a list of errors in nineteen pages.

But to politics and literature there must be an end. Lord Lyttelton had never the appearance of a strong or of a healthy man; he had a slender uncompacted frame, and a meagre face: he lasted however sixty years, and was then seized with his last illness. Of his death a very affecting and instructive account has been given by his physician, which will spare me the

task of his moral character.

"On Sunday evening the symptoms of his lord-"ship's disorder, which for a week past had alarmed us, put on a fatal appearance, and his lordship believed himself to be a dying man. From this time

" he fuffered by restlessness rather than pain; though his nerves were apparently much fluttered, his men-

tal faculties never feemed stronger, when he was

" thoroughly awake.

"His lordship's bilious and hepatic complaints feemed alone not equal to the expected mournful event; his long want of sleep, whether the confequence of the irritation in the bowels, or, which is

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"more probable, of causes of a different kind, accounts for his loss of strength, and for his death,

" very fufficiently.

"Though his lordship wished his approaching disfolution not to be lingering, he waited for it with refignation. He said, 'It is a folly, a keeping me in
misery, now to attempt to prolong life;' yet he was
easily persuaded, for the satisfaction of others, to
do or take any thing thought proper for him. On
Saturday he had been remarkably better, and we
were not without some hopes of his recovery.

"On Sunday, about eleven in the forenoon, his-"lordship sent for me, and said he felt a great hurry,. " and wished to have a little conversation with me " in order to divert it. He then proceeded to open. "the fountain of that heart, from whence goodness: " had fo long flowed as from a copious spring. 'Doc-" tor,' faid he, ' you shall be my confessor: when I "first set out in the world, I had friends who endea-" voured to shake my belief in the Christian religion. "I faw difficulties which fraggered me; but I kept " my mind open to conviction. The evidences and "doctrines of Christianity, studied with attention, " made me a most firm and persuaded believer of the "Christian religion. I have made it the rule of my "life, and it is the ground of my future hopes. " have erred and finned; but have repented, and ne-" ver indulged any vicious habit. In politics, and " public life, I have made public good the rule of "my conduct. I never gave counfels which I did not "at the time think the best. I have seen that I was " fometimes in the wrong, but I did not err defigned-"ly. I have endeavoured, in private life, to do all "the good in my power, and never for a moment " could indulge malicious or unjust defigns upon any " person whatsoever.'

" At another time he faid, "I must leave my foul

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in the same state it was in before this illness; I find this a very inconvenient time for solicitude about

"any thing."

"On the evening, when the symptoms of death came on, he said, 'I shall die; but it will not be your fault.' When lord and lady Valentia came to see his lordship, he gave them his solemn benediction, and said, 'Be good, be virtuous, my lord; you must come to this.' Thus he continued giving his dying benediction to all around him. On Monday morning a lucid interval gave some small hopes, but these vanished in the evening; and he continued dying, but with very little uneasiness, till Tuesday morning, August 22, when between seven and eight o'clock he expired, almost without a groan."

His lordship was buried at Hagley; and the following inscription is cut on the side of his lady's mo-

nument:

"This unadorned ftone was placed here By the particular defire and express

" Directions of the Right Honourable "George Lord LYTTELION,

" Who died August 22, 1773, aged 64."

Lord LYTTELTON's Poems are the works of a man of literature and judgment, devoting part of his time to verification. They have nothing to be defpifed, and little to be admired. Of his Progress of Love, it is sufficient blame to say that it is pastoral. His blank verse in Blenheim has neither much force mor much elegance. His little performances, whether Songs

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n t Songs or Epigrams, are sometimes spritely, and sometimes insipid. His epistolary pieces have a smooth equability, which cannot much tire, because they are short, but which seldom elevates or surprizes. But from this censure ought to be excepted his Advice to Belinda, which, though for the most part written when he was very young, contains much truth and much prudence, very elegantly and vigorously expressed, and shews a mind attentive to life, and a power of poetry which cultivation might have raised to excellence.

FINIS.



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